三国志 30

周瑜と竜鳳

横山光輝

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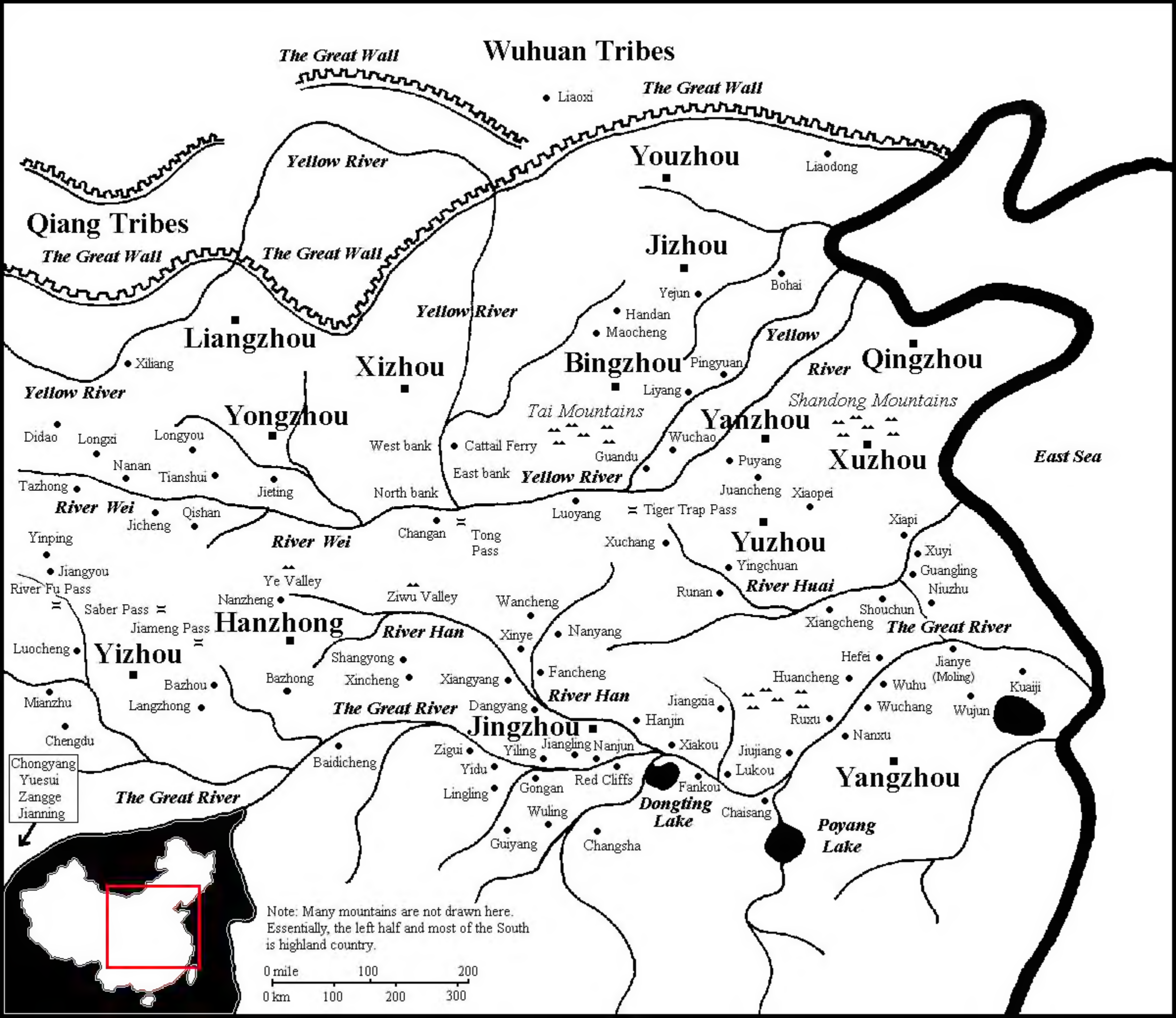
SANGOKUSHI

30

ZHOU YU AND PANG TONG

YOKOYAMA MITSUTERU

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING


Wuhuan Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Liaoxi
Youzhou
Liaodong
Yellow River
Qiang Tribes
The Great Wall
The Great Wall
Jizhou
Bohai
Yejun
Handan
Maocheng
Yellow River
Liangzhou
Xizhou
Bingzhou
Pingyuan
Yellow River
Qingzhou
Xiliang
Yellow River
Liyang
Shandong Mountains
Tai Mountains
Yongzhou
Yanzhou
Didao
Longxi
Longyou
West bank
Cattail Ferry
Wuchao
Guandu
Xuzhou
East Sea
Nanan
East bank
Yellow River
Puyang
Tianshui
Tazhong
Jieting
North bank
Juancheng
Xiaopei
River Wei
Qishan
Luoyang
Tiger Trap Pass
Jicheng
Changan
Tong Pass
Xiapi
Yuzhou
Yinping
River Wei
Xuchang
Xuyi
Jiangyou
Ye Valley
Yingchuan
Guangling
River Fu Pass
Ziwu Valley
Runan
River Huai
Niuzhu
Saber Pass
Nanzheng
Wancheng
Shouchun
Jiameng Pass
Hanzhong
River Han
Xinye
Nanyang
Xiangcheng
The Great River
Luocheng
Yizhou
Shangyong
Hefei
Jianye (Moling)
Fancheng
Huancheng
Bazhou
Bazhong
Xincheng
Xiangyang
Wuhu
Kuaiji
River Han
Jiangxia
Mianzhu
Langzhong
The Great River
Dangyang
Wuchang
Wujun
Ruxu
Hanjin
Jingzhou
Chengdu
Nanxu
Zigui
Yiling
Jiangling
Nanjun
Xiakou
Jiujiang
Baidicheng
Yidu
Lukou
Yangzhou
Chongyang
Yuesui
Zangge
Jianning
Red Cliffs
Fankou
Gongan
Lingling
Dongting Lake
Chaisang
Wuling
Poyang Lake
Guiyang
Changsha
The Great River
Note: Many mountains are not drawn here.
Essentially, the left half and most of the South
is highland country.
0 mile 100 200
0 km 100 200 300

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS

PART 1: CHARACTERS TO KEEP IN MIND

CAO CAO MENGDE:
THE AMBITIOUS AND MACHIAVELLIAN HERO OF SANGOKUSHI. HAVING BECOME THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, HE HAS RELEGATED EMPEROR XIAN AS A MERE PUPPET RULER.

CHEN DENG:
THE SON OF CHEN GUI AND FORMERLY TAO QIAN OF XUZHOU'S SUBORDINATE. HE AND HIS FATHER SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL.

CHEN GUI:
FATHER OF CHEN DENG WHO SUCCESSFULLY PLOTTED LU BU'S DOWNFALL. DESPITE SECRETLY WORKING TOGETHER WITH LIU BEI AGAINST CAO CAO, CAO CAO SPARES HIS LIFE AND ALLOWS HIM TO CONTINUE LIVING IN XUZHOU.

CHENG GONG:
A CITY GUARD CAPTAIN WHO ARRESTED CAO CAO, ONLY TO FREE AND ESCAPE WITH HIM AFTER SYMPATHIZING WITH HIS STORY. HOWEVER, HE LATER DEFECTS TO LU BU AND SERVES AS HIS ADVISOR. IN VOLUME 14, HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH LU BU.

EMPRESS HE:
ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HER BEAUTY WAS NOTICED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS WHO THEN PRESENTED HER TO EMPEROR LING. SHE SOON BECAME EMPEROR LING'S FAVOURITE CONSORT AND GAVE BIRTH TO PRINCE LIU BIAN. HOWEVER, SHE AND HER SON WERE REMOVED FROM POWER AND KILLED BY DONG ZHUO WHEN HE CAME TO POWER.

DIAN WEI:
CAO CAO'S PERSONAL BODYGUARD, RENOWNED FOR HIS STRENGTH. HE IS ALSO KNOWN BY THE NICKNAME, "E LAI," IN REFERENCE TO THE MIGHTY GENERAL OF THE SAME NAME WHO SERVED UNDER KING ZHOU OF SHANG. IN VOLUME 12, HE WAS KILLED DURING ZHANG XIU'S PLOT TO KILL CAO CAO.

DIAO CHAN:
A SLAVE GIRL OF WANG YUN, WHO RAISED HER AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER. SHE AND WANG YUN PLOTTED TO DISTANCE LU BU FROM DONG ZHUO BY HAVING HER SEDUCE BOTH MEN. IN VOLUME 8, SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE AFTER ACCOMPLISHING HER GOAL.

DONG CHENG:
ELDER STATESMAN OF HAN WHO IS EMPEROR XIAN'S CONFIDANT. EMPEROR XIAN SECRETELY ASKS HIM TO ELIMINATE CAO CAO, WHO NOW RULES THE IMPERIAL COURT AS CHANCELLOR. IN VOLUME 17, HE IS EXECUTED AFTER HIS ASSASSINATION PLOT IS FOUND OUT BY CAO CAO.

DONG ZHUO:
GOVERNOR OF LIANGZHOU WHO LATER SEIZED CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND SEATED HIMSELF AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN, BECOMING AN INFAMOUS TYRANT. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS RIGHT-HAND MAN, LU BU.

GAN NING:
FORMER-PIRATE WHO IS NOW A FIRECE GENERAL OF WU.

GONGSUN ZAN:
GOVERNOR OF BEIPING AND FRIEND TO LIU BEI. HE WAGES WAR AGAINST YUAN SHAO AFTER THE LATTER TRICKS HIM AND KILLS HIS YOUNG BROTHER. IN VOLUME 15, YUAN SHAO'S ARMY CONQUERS BEIPING, CAUSING GONGSUN ZAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

GUAN YU YUNCHANG:
SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER TO LIU BEI AND SWORN OLDER BROTHER TO ZHANG FEI. HE IS AS FIERCE AS GUAN YU BUT IS MORE RESTRAINED AND CALM IN HIS MANNERISMS.

GUAN PING:
GUAN YU'S ADOPTED SON WHO FIRST APPEARS IN VOLUME 19.

GUO JIA:
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. HE DIES FROM ILLNESS DURING CAO CAO'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE YUAN FAMILY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

HUANG ZHONG:
AN ELDERLY WARRIOR GENERAL RENOWNED ESPECIALLY FOR HIS SKILL WITH THE BOW. FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN BUT SINCE THE END OF V28, HE NOW SERVES LIU BEI.

JIA XU:
THE SHREWD STRATEGIST AND ADVISOR TO ZHANG XIU. HE AND ZHANG XIU PLOTS A FAILED ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON CAO CAO, BUT SUCCEEDS IN KILLING DIAN WEI. IN VOLUME 16, HE AND ZHANG XIU DEFECT TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

LI RU:
CUNNING ADVISOR TO DONG ZHUO. WITH HIS ADVICE, DONG ZHUO FIRMLY SECURES HIS SEAT AS THE CHANCELLOR OF HAN. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED ALONG WITH DONG ZHUO WHEN LU BU REBELS.

LIU BEI XUANDE:
THE CENTRAL CHARACTER OF SANGOKUSHI. A KIND AND VIRTUOUS MAN, SAID TO BE THE DESCENDANT OF EMPEROR JING OF HAN. HE HAS SWORN AN OATH OF BROTHERHOOD WITH GUAN YU AND ZHANG FEI.

LIU BIAO:
THE GOVERNOR OF JINGZHOU. HE PASSES AWAY DUE TO SICKNESS IN VOLUME 22.

LIU XIE (EMPEROR XIAN OF HAN):
FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINCE OF CHENLIU, HE IS THE CURRENT EMPEROR OF HAN, THOUGH CAO CAO HAS SEIZED ALL REAL POWER AWAY FROM HIM.

LU BU:
HE IS SAID TO BE THE STRONGEST WARRIOR WITH THE FASTEST HORSE, THE RED HARE. IN VOLUME 14, HE WAS BETRAYED BY HIS SUBORDINATES, AND EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

LU SU:
MILITARY GENERAL AND ADVISOR OF WU.

MA TENG:
GOVERNOR OF XILIANG AND FATHER OF MA CHAO. UNLIKE THE ACTUAL HISTORICAL FIGURE, HE IS DEPICTED AS A HAN LOYALIST WHO SIGNS DONG CHENG'S BLOOD SEAL PLEDGE.

PANG TONG SHIYUAN:
NICKNAMED THE YOUNG PHOENIX (FENGCHU), HE IS A MASTERFUL STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING, ALONG WITH ZHUGE LIANG AND XU SHU. HE CURRENTLY SERVES NO LORD BUT ASSISTS WU IN THE BATTLE OF RED CLIFFS.

SHUI JING:
HIS REAL NAME IS SIMA HUI BUT HE IS MORE COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS TAOIST NAME, SHUI JING (MEANING WATER MIRROR). HE IS THE TEACHER OF ZHUGE LIANG, PANG TONG, AND XU SHU.

SUN CE:
ELDEST SON OF SUN JIAN. IN VOLUME 19, ASSASSINS MAKE A FAILED ATTEMPT AT HIS LIFE. HIS MENTAL HEALTH SOON DETERIORATES DUE TO THE INCIDENT WITH YU JI AND HE SUCCUMBS TO DEATH.

SUN JIAN:
BORN IN WU COMMANDERY, HE WAS THE GOVERNOR OF CHANGSHA. HE PARTICIPATES IN THE ALLIANCE TO BRING DOWN DONG ZHUO. BUT IS FINDING OF THE IMPERIAL SEAL CAUSES LIU BIAO AND YUAN SHAO TO TURN ON HIM. IN VOLUME 7, HE TRIES TO EXACT HIS REVENGE ON LIU BIAO, ONLY TO BE KILLED IN BATTLE.

SUN QUAN:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF SUN CE AND THE CURRENT RULER OF WU, A REGION IN SOUTHERN CHINA.

TAISHI CI:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU YAO BUT DEFECTED TO SUN CE IN VOLUME 11. DURING THE BATTLE OF HEFEI (VOL. 29), HE FALLS PREY TO ZHANG LIAO'S PLAN AND IS KILLED IN BATTLE.

TAO QIAN:
THE KIND GOVERNOR OF XUZHOU WHO ACCIDENTALLY INVOKES CAO CAO'S WRATH WHEN HIS DISLOYAL SUBORDINATE ZHANG KAI KILLS CAO CAO'S FATHER, CAO SONG.

THE TEN ATTENDANTS:
A CORRUPT GROUP OF 10 EUNUCHS WHO WERE THE HIGHEST RANKING MINISTERS OF THE IMPERIAL COURT. THEY SUCCEEDED IN ASSASSINATING GENERAL HE JIN BUT WERE LATER KILLED BY HE JIN'S ARMY LED BY YUAN SHAO.

WANG YUN:
THE MINISTER OF THE MASSES, ONE OF THE 3 HIGHEST RANKING POSTS IN THE IMPERIAL COURT. HE SUCCESSFULLY PLOTS DONG ZHUO'S DOWNFALL USING DIAO CHANG IN VOLUME 8. HOWEVER, HE IS LATER KILLED BY REMNANTS OF DONG ZHUO'S ARMY (UNSHOWN IN MANGA).

WEI YAN:
GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED LIU BIAO AND HAN XUAN ALONG WITH HUANG ZHONG BUT SINCE THE END OF V28, HE NOW SERVES LIU BEI.

WEN CHOU:
HE AND YANG LIANG ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 18, HE IS AMBUSHED BY CAO CAO'S ARMY AND KILLED BY GUAN YU.

XIAHOU DUN:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. HE LOST HIS LEFT EYE DURING A BATTLE AGAINST LU BU'S ARMY IN VOLUME 13.

XU CHU:
TRUSTED GENERAL OF CAO CAO. ORIGINALY A PEASANT, HE WAS RECRUITED BY CAO CAO WHO WAS IMPRESSED AFTER SEEING XU CHU'S DUEL WITH DIAN WEI.

XU SHU (SHAN FU):
THE TALENTED STRATEGIST WHO STUDIED UNDER SHUI JING. AFTER A BRIEF STINT OF SERVING LIU BEI, HE IS TRICKED INTO COMING TO XUCHANG AND SERVING CAO CAO (VOLUME 21).

XUN YU:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S MOST TALENTED ADVISORS.

YAN LIANG:
HE AND WEN CHOU ARE YUAN SHAO'S TWO STRONGEST GENERALS. IN VOLUME 17, HE WAS KILLED BY GUAN YU WHILE FIGHTING CAO CAO'S ARMY AT BAIMA.

YI JI:
AN ADVISOR TO LIU BIAO WHO WARNS LIU BEI ABOUT CAI MAO'S PLOT TO ASSASSINATE LIU BEI IN VOLUME 20.

YUAN SHAO:
OLDER BROTHER OF YUAN SHU AND THE GOVERNOR OF JIZHOU. AFTER MANY YEARS OF WARRING AGAINST CAO CAO FOR CONTROL OF NORTHERN CHINA, HE AND HIS FAMILY IS DEFEATED AND KILLED.

YUAN SHU:
YOUNGER BROTHER OF YUAN SHAO AND THE GOVERNOR OF NANYANG. AFTER RECEIVING THE IMPERIAL SEAL FROM SUN CE, HE DECLARES HIMSELF AS THE EMPEROR OF ZHONG DYNASTY. IN VOLUME 15, HE DIES OF THIRST AFTER BEING ON THE RUN FROM LIU BEI AND CAO CAO'S ARMIES.

ZHANG FEI YIDE:
A FIRECE, SHORT-TEMPERED WARRIOR WHO IS THE SWORN YOUNGER BROTHER OF LIU BEI AND GUAN YU.

ZHANG LIAO:
ONE OF CAO CAO'S TOP GENERALS. HE WAS FORMERLY LU BU'S SUBORDINATE BUT DEFECTED TO CAO CAO AFTER THE FORMER'S EXECUTION.

ZHANG XIU:
LORD OF WANCHENG WHO ATTEMPTED TO KILL CAO CAO DURING THE BATTLE OF WANCHENG IN VOLUME 12. AFTER YEARS OF CONFLICT AGAINST CAO CAO, HE FINALLY DECIDES TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO IN VOLUME 16.

ZHAO YUN ZILONG:
A FORMER RETAINER TO YUAN SHAO WHO LATER DEFECTED TO SERVE GONGSUN ZAN. AFTER GONGSUN ZAN'S DEATH, HE LATER MEETS UP WITH LIU BEI AND FINALLY BECOMES HIS RETAINER.

ZHOU CANG:
FORMERLY A YELLOW TURBAN, HE MEETS GUAN YU IN VOLUME 18 AND BECOMES HIS SUBORDINATE.

ZHOU YU GONGJIN:
SWORN BROTHER OF SUN CE, HE IS A SKILLED ADMIRAL WHO SERVES AS THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF FOR WU'S ARMY. CONVINCED THAT HIS ALLY KONGMING IS TOO MUCH OF A THREAT, HE CURRENTLY SCHEMES FOR HIS DEATH.

ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING:
MASTERFUL STRATEGIST AND FORMER STUDENT OF SHUI JING. IN VOLUME 21, HE YIELDS TO LIU BEI'S PERSISTENCE AND DECIDES TO BECOME HIS SUBJECT.

SANGOKUSHI'S CAST OF CHARACTERS
PART 2: OTHER MINOR CHARACTERS

CAI MAO:
FORMER GENERAL OF LIU BIAO, WHO BECAME THE SUPREME ADMIRAL OF WEI'S NAVY WHEN JINGZHOU SURRENDERED TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE IS FRAMED BY ZHOU YU'S PLOT AND THUS EXECUTED BY CAO CAO.

CAO REN:
GENERAL SERVING UNDER CAO CAO.

CAO HONG:
GENERAL AND COUSIN TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 6, HE SAVES CAO CAO FROM CERTAIN DEATH.

CAO SONG:
CAO CAO'S FATHER AND A FORMER GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. IN VOLUME 8, HE IS KILLED BY TAO QIAN'S ESCORT AND FORMER YELLOW TURBAN, ZHANG KAI.

DING YUAN:
GOVERNOR OF BINGZHOU AND LU BU'S FOSTER-FATHER. HE OBJECTED TO DONG ZHUO'S SCHEME TO PLACE PRINCE CHENLIU AS THE EMPEROR OF HAN, EARNING DONG ZHUO'S WRATH. IN VOLUME 4, HE IS BETRAYED AND KILLED BY HIS FOSTER-SON, LU BU, WHO THEN DEFECTS TO SERVE DONG ZHUO.

EMPRESS DOWAGER DONG:
MOTHER TO THE FORMER EMPEROR LING AND GRANDMOTHER TO EMPEROR XIAN. IN VOLUME 3, EMPRESS HE ORDERS FOR HER DEATH TO SECURE HER SON LIU BIAN'S THRONE AS THE NEXT EMPEROR OF HAN.

GAO SHUN:
ONE OF LU BU'S TRUSTED GENERALS. HE IS EXECUTED ALONG WITH HIS LORD IN VOLUME 14.

GUO SI:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND LI JUE TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

HUANG GAI:
LOYAL GENERAL OF WU, WHOSE FAMILY HAS SERVED THE SUN FAMILY FOR THREE GENERATIONS.

HE JIN:
OLDER BROTHER OF EMPRESS HE. ORIGINALLY A SIMPLE BUTCHER, HE BECAME A GENERAL WHEN HIS YOUNGER SISTER BECAME EMPEROR LING'S CONSORT. IN VOLUME 3, HE ATTEMPTS TO ELIMINATE THE TEN ATTENDANTS, ONLY TO BE DISSUADED FROM DOING SO BY HIS YOUNGER SISTER. HE IS LATER KILLED BY THE TEN ATTENDANTS.

HOU CHENG:
ONE OF LU BU'S GENERALS. IN VOLUME 14, HE, ALONG WITH GENERALS WEI XU AND SONG XIAN, BETRAYS LU BU AND DEFECTS TO CAO CAO'S SIDE.

HUA XIONG:
FAMED GENERAL SERVING UNDER DONG ZHUO. IN VOLUME 5, HE DEFEATS SUN JIAN'S ARMY BUT IS LATER KILLED BY GUAN YU.

JI PING:
IMPERIAL PHYSICIAN OF HAN WHO, WITH DONG CHENG, PLOTS TO POISON CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 17, CAO CAO DISCOVERS THEIR PLOT AND EXECUTES HIM.

JIANG GAN:
CHILDHOOD FRIEND OF ZHOU YU AND NOW AN ADVISOR TO CAO CAO. IN VOLUME 25, HE FAILS TO PERSUADE ZHOU YU TO DEFECT TO CAO CAO, AND INADVERTANTLY HELPS ZHOU YU'S PLOT TO FRAME CAI MAO.

JIANG QIN:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH ZHOU TAI, BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR SUN CE'S FATHER, SUN JIAN.

LADY FUYOU:
FICTIONAL CHARACTER CREATED BY MITSUTERU YOKOYAMA AND LIU BEI'S FIRST LOVE. ZHANG FEI FORMERLY SERVED HER FAMILY, WHO WERE MASSCRED BY THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELS.

LADY MI:
LIU BEI'S FIRST WIFE.

LADY SUN:
SUN QUAN'S YOUNGER SISTER AND LIU BEI'S WIFE AS OF VOLUME 29. SHE IS QUITE FOND OF WEAPONS AND MARTIAL ARTS TO THE POINT THAT SHE HAS HER ATTENDANT LADIES DRESSED IN FULL ARMOUR. HER REAL NAME IS NOT KNOWN BUT SHE IS ALSO KNOWN AS SUN REN, SUN RENXIAN, SUN SHANGXIAN, AND SUN AN.

LI JUE:
A GENERAL WHO FORMERLY SERVED DONG ZHUO. AFTER DONG ZHUO'S DEATH, HE AND GUO SI TOOK CONTROL OF LUOYANG AND DID AS THEY PLEASED UNTIL THE EMPEROR RUNS TO CAO CAO FOR PROTECTION.

LI DIAN:
SCHOLARLY GENERAL UNDER THE SERVICE OF CAO CAO.

LIU BIAN:
THE SON OF EMPRESS HE AND BRIEFLY THE EMPEROR OF HAN AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER, EMPEROR LING. IN VOLUME 4, HE WAS DEPOSED BY DONG ZHUO AND LATER KILLED ALONG WITH HIS MOTHER BY LI RU.

LIU FENG:
LIU BEI'S ADOPTED SON. ORIGINALLY THE NEPHEW OF LIU MI, HE WAS ADOPTED BY LIU BEI WHO TOOK A LIKING TO HIM IN VOLUME 21.

LU ZHI:
LIU BEI'S FORMER TEACHER AND THE PALACE COMMANDER WHO WAS PLACED IN CHARGE OF LEADING THE HAN ARMY AGAINST THE YELLOW TURBANS. HE WAS LATER DEMOTED FOR FAILING TO BRIBE ONE OF THE IMPERIAL MESSENGERS.

LIU QI:
ELDEST SON OF LIU BIAO AND THE OLDER BROTHER OF LIU CONG.

MA LIANG:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS. FOURTH YOUNGEST OF THE FIVE MA BROTHERS, AND IS NOTED FOR HIS INTELLECT AND WHITE EYEBROWS.

MI ZHU:
ONE OF LIU BEI'S ADVISORS.

SUN QIAN:
ADVISOR/EMISSARY SERVING LIU BEI. (HIS ROLE IS MUCH SMALLER IN SANGOKUSHI COMPARED TO THE ORIGINAL NOVEL.)

YU JIN:
GENERAL SERVING CAO CAO. (IN RECORDS OF THE THRE KINGDOMS, WRITTEN BY CHEN SHOU, YU JIN IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE FIVE TOP GENERALS FOR WEI.)

ZHANG BAO:
ZHANG JIAO'S YOUNGER BROTHER AND THE YELLOW TURBAN'S GENERAL OF THE LAND. HE WAS KILLED BY LIU BEI IN VOLUME 2.

ZHANG JIAO:
LEADER OF THE YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION. HE PASSED AWAY DUE TO ILLNESS IN VOLUME 3.

ZHANG ZHAO/ZHANG HONG:
THE TWO GENIUSES OF JIANGDONG, ALSO KNOWN AS THE "TWO ZHANGS." AFTER SUN CE'S ADMANT INSISTENCE, THEY DECIDE TO SERVE HIM AND HELP HIS CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER JIANGNAN AND JIANGDONG.

ZHOU TAI:
GENERAL OF WU. FORMERLY A BANDIT ALONG WITH JIANG QIN BUT BECAME SUN CE'S SUBORDINATE OUT OF ADMIRATION FOR HIS FATHER, SUN JIAN.

SANGOKUSHI (ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS)

三国志

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ZHOU YU AND PANG TONG

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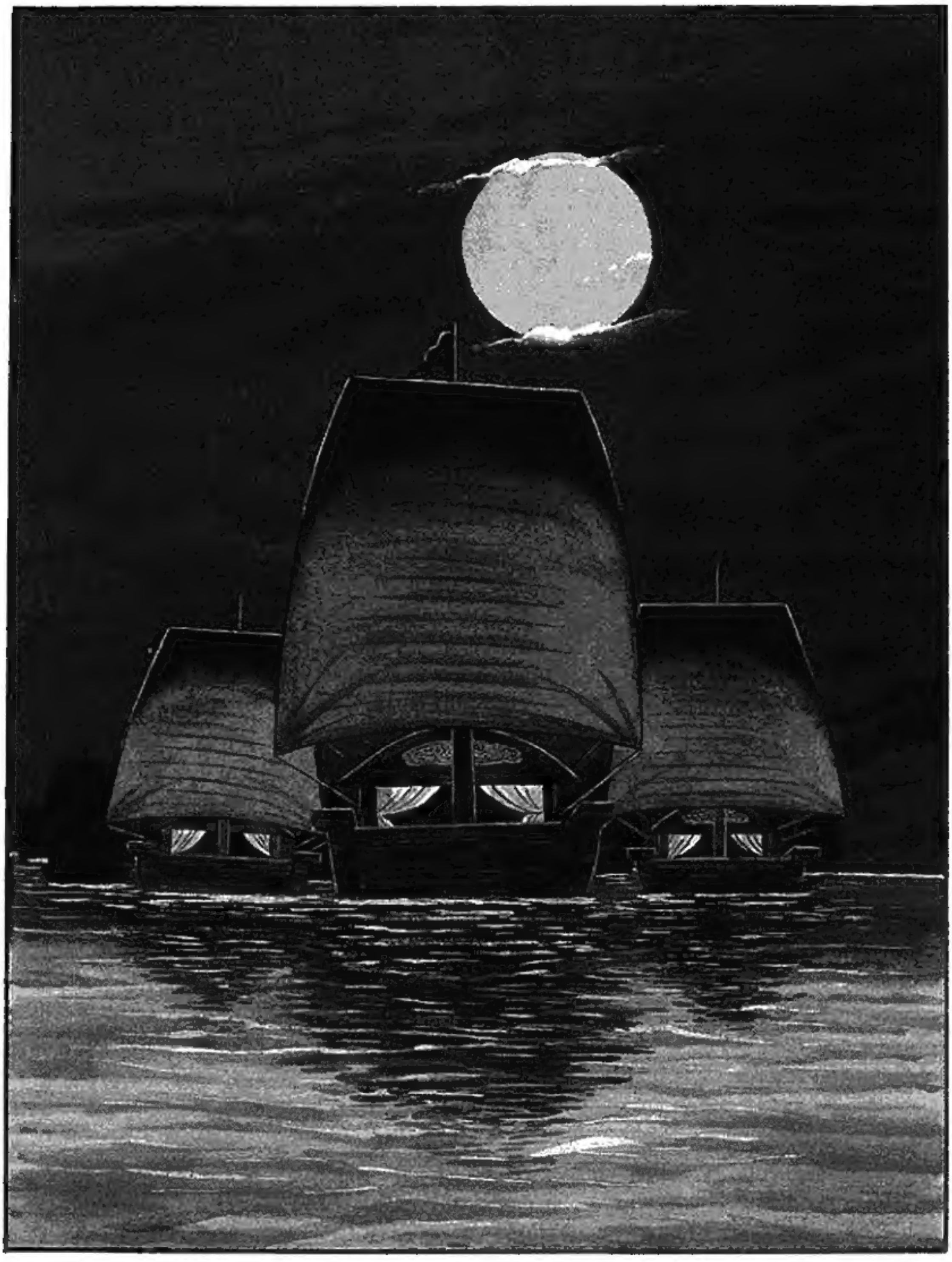
〔月刊『コミックトム』掲載〕

KONGMING'S FORESIGHT



IT'S STILL A LITTLE EARLY TO FEEL RELIEVED, MY LORD.

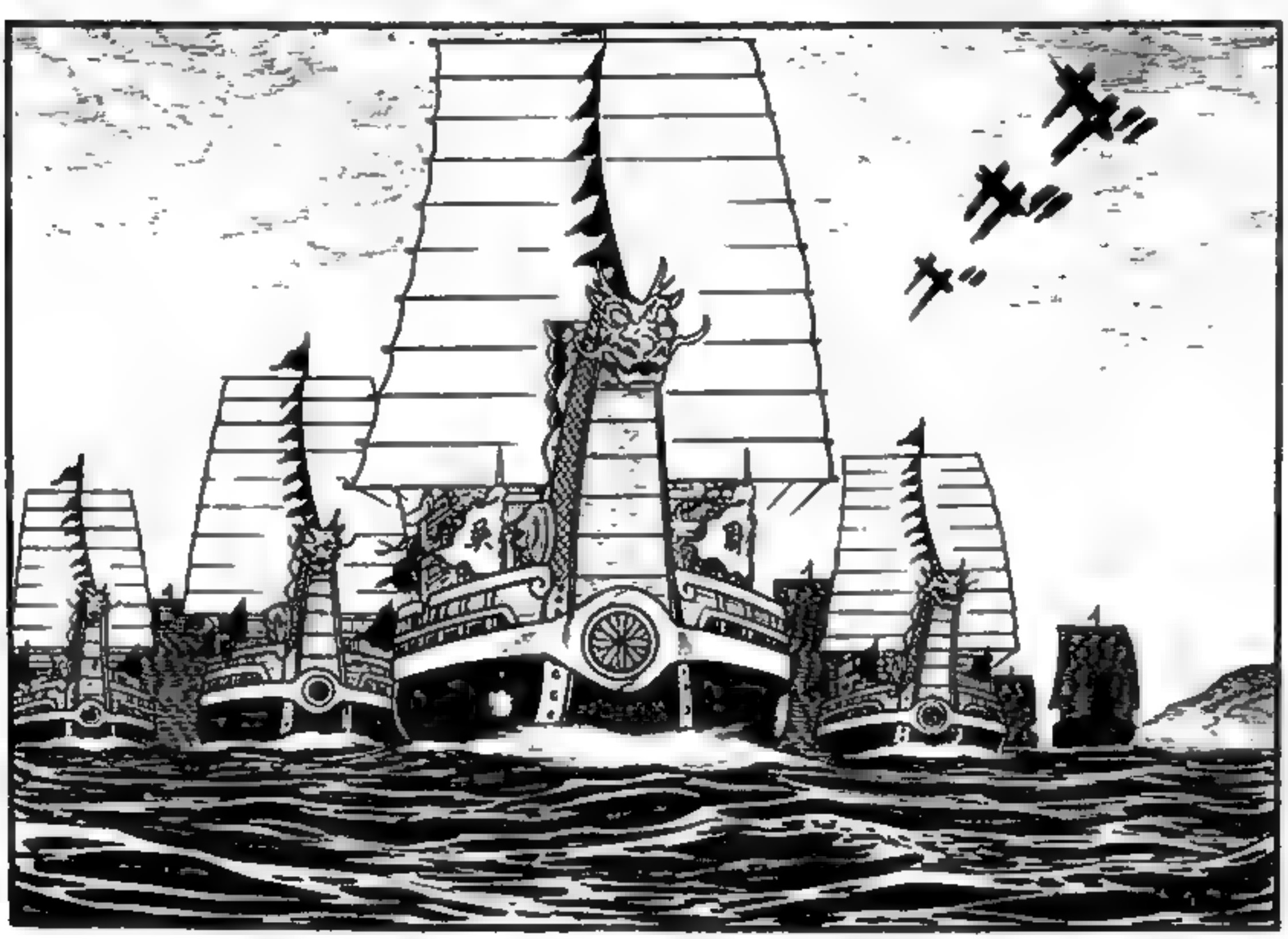
FOR A MOMENT THERE, I THOUGHT I HAD FINALLY MET MY END.

I'M CERTAIN ZHOU YU WOULD NOT JUST STAND BY AND ALLOW US TO ESCAPE SO EASILY. IF HE SENT PURSUERS FROM CHAISANG, THEY SHOULD APPEAR ANY MOMENT NOW...

FLEET SPOTTED, SIR!

MOST LIKELY.

PURSU-ERS?



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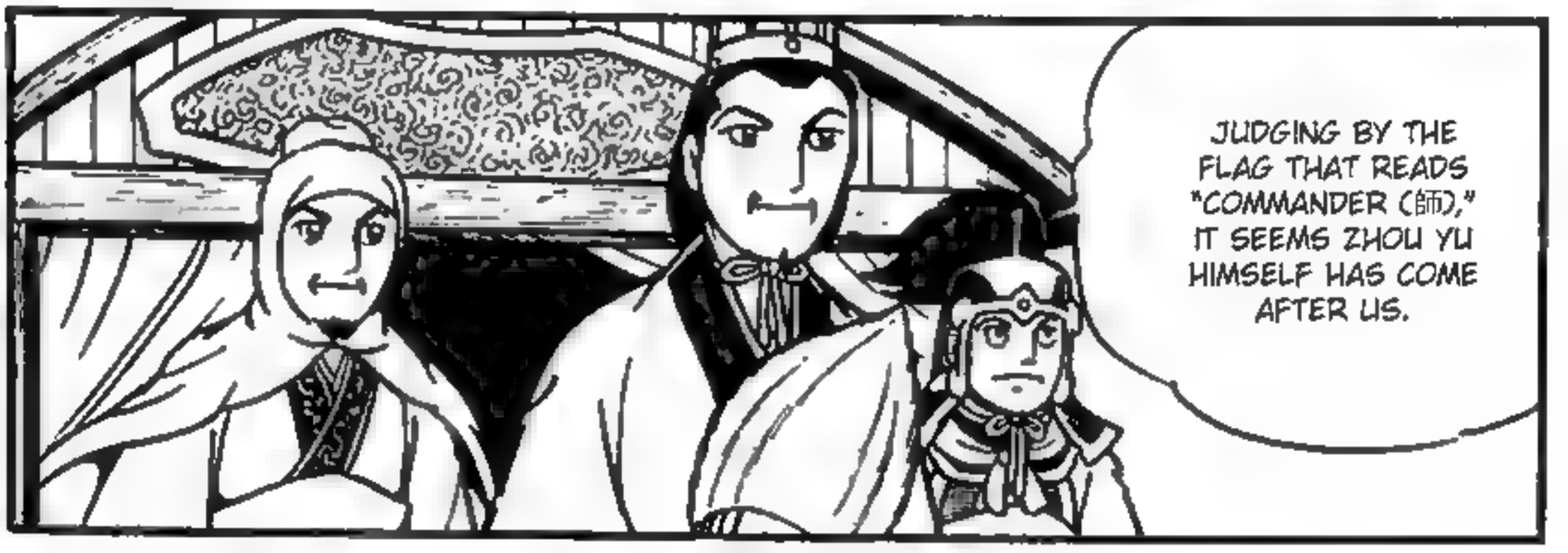
JUDGING BY THE FLAG THAT READS "COMMANDER (師)," IT SEEMS ZHOU YU HIMSELF HAS COME AFTER US.

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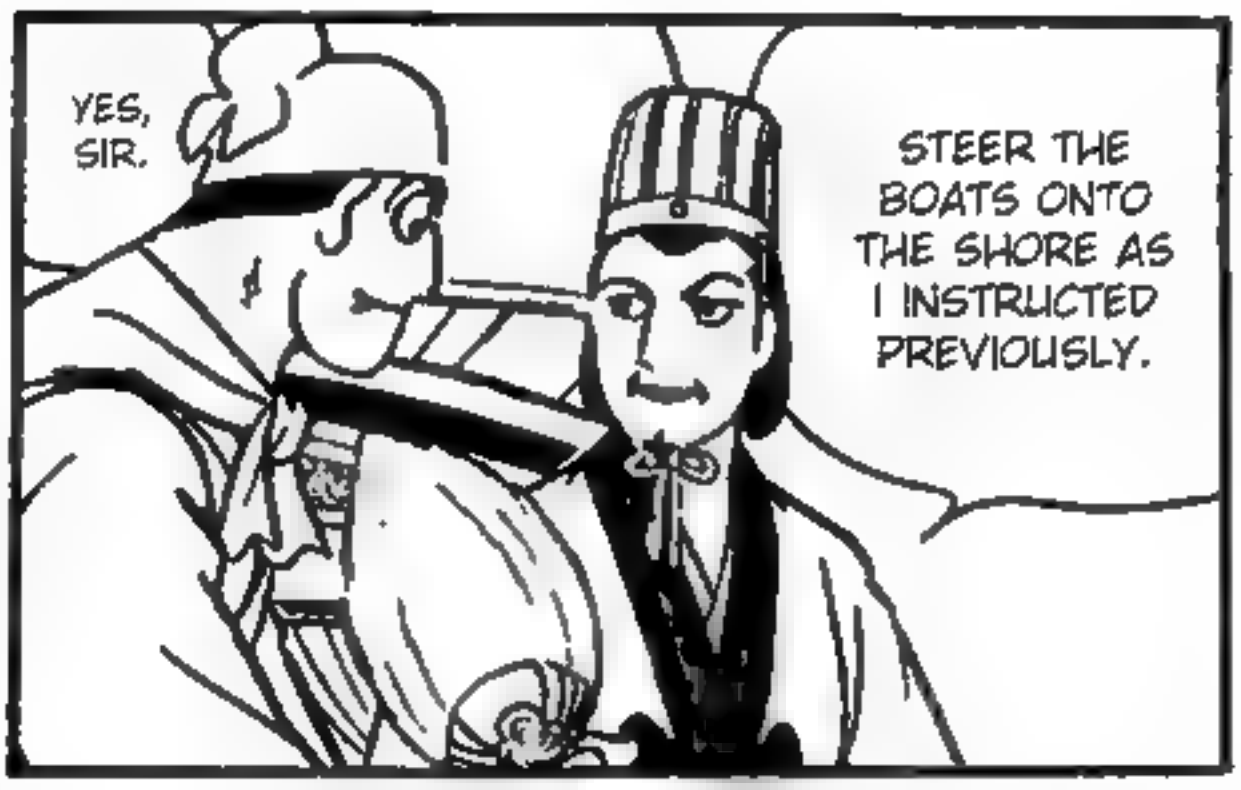
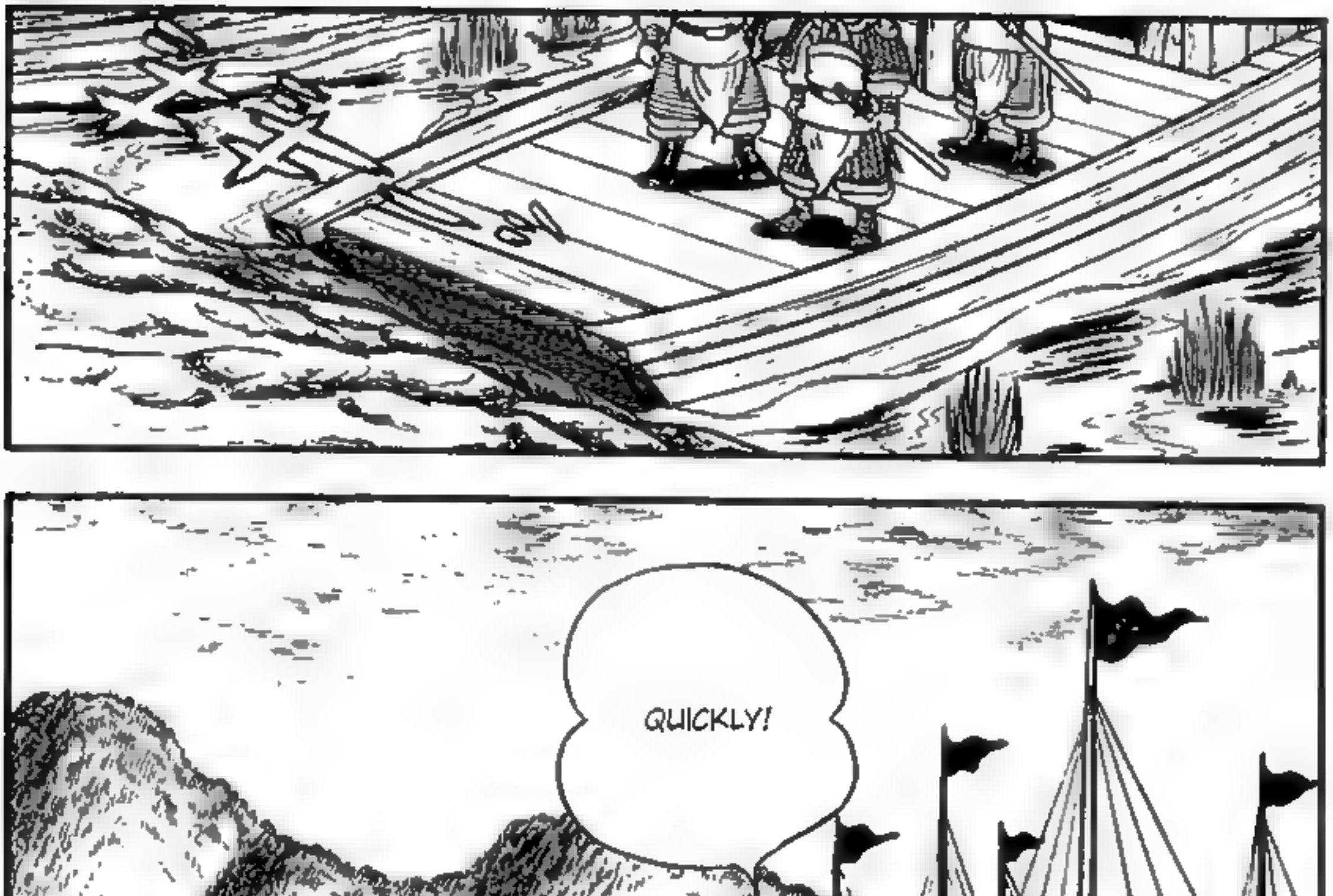
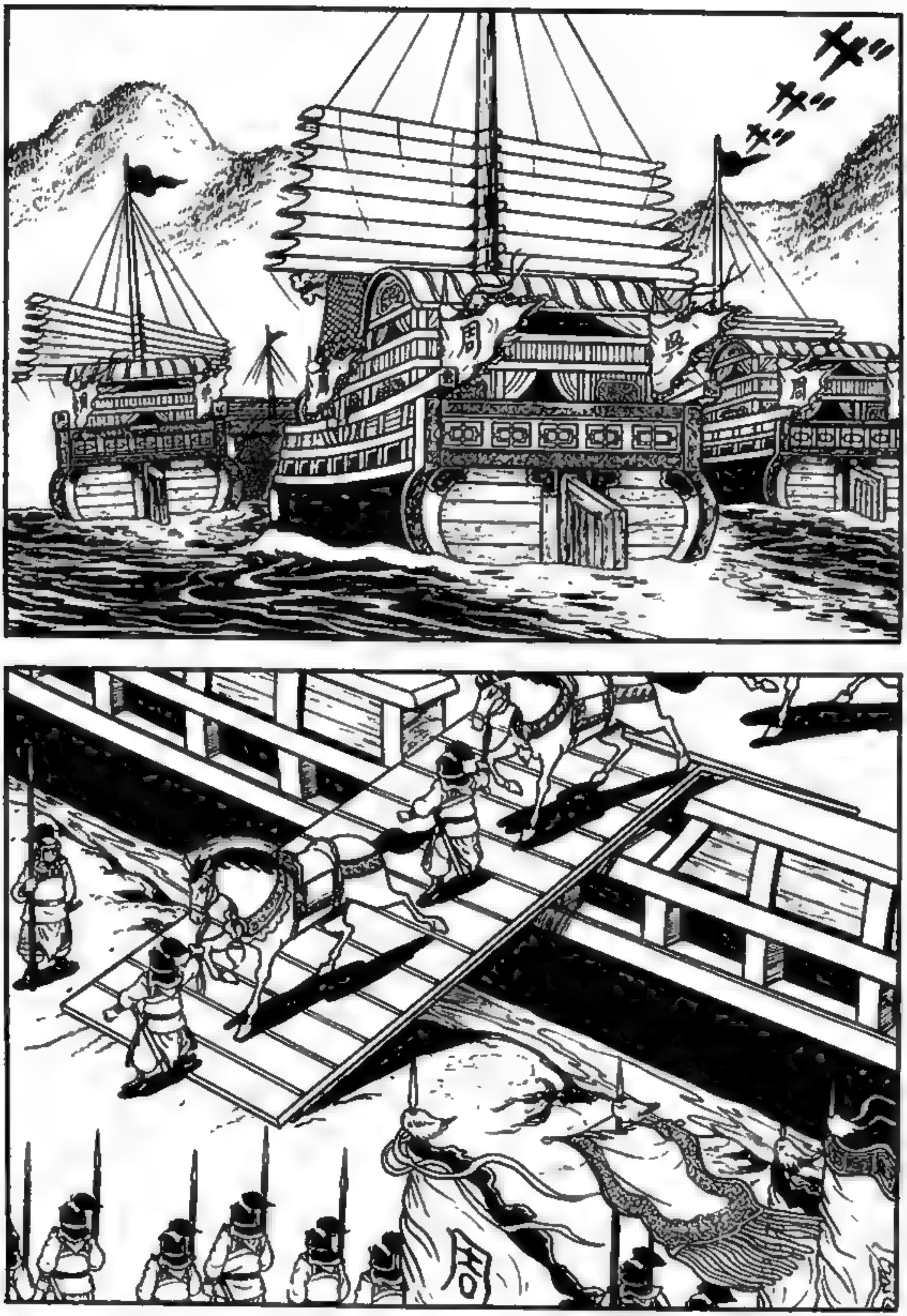

YES, SIR.
STEER THE BOATS ONTO THE SHORE AS I INSTRUCTED PREVIOUSLY.

ZHOU YU REIGNS SUPREME ON WATER. THE ONLY WAY POSSIBLE FOR US TO ESCAPE IS TO TAKE THE ROUTE ON LAND.
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING, KONGMING?


QUICKLY!

TAKE OUR SHIPS ASHORE!

SO THEY PLAN TO ESCAPE ON FOOT, DO THEY?


周
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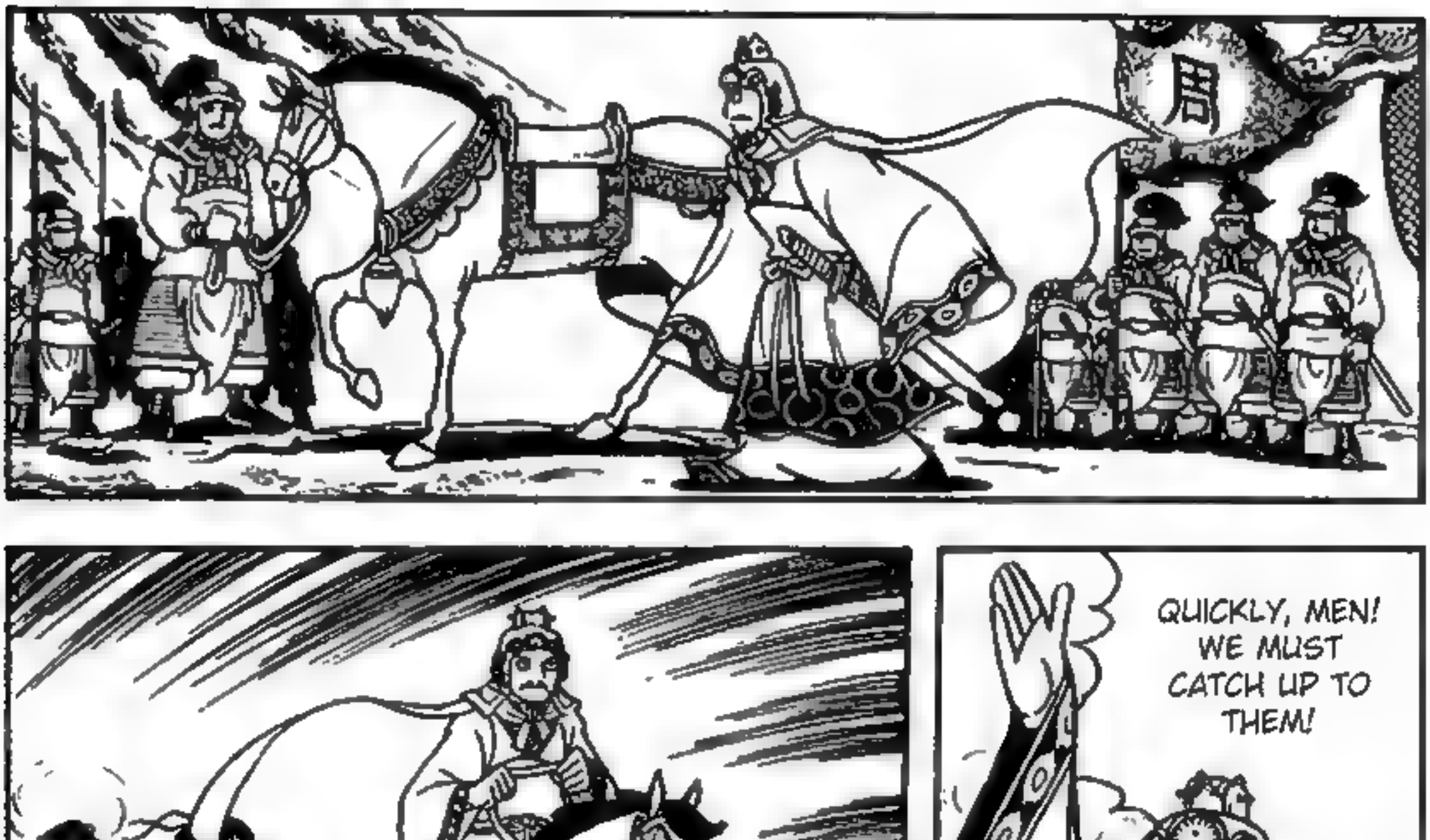

周
QUICKLY, MEN! WE MUST CATCH UP TO THEM!

CLANG!
CLANG!
CLANG!
CLANG! CLANG!
HM?
周
周
周

LET THOSE WHO BEAR ILL-INTENT AGAINST MY LORD TAKE MY BLADE!

DAMN IT... DO NOT FALTER! CHARGE!

AHH!

PATHETIC WORMS!

ドドド

AND I, WEI YAN!

I AM HUANG ZHONG!

RETREAT! RETREAT!

CURSES! THE ENEMIES HAD PREPARED FOR THIS IN ADVANCE...

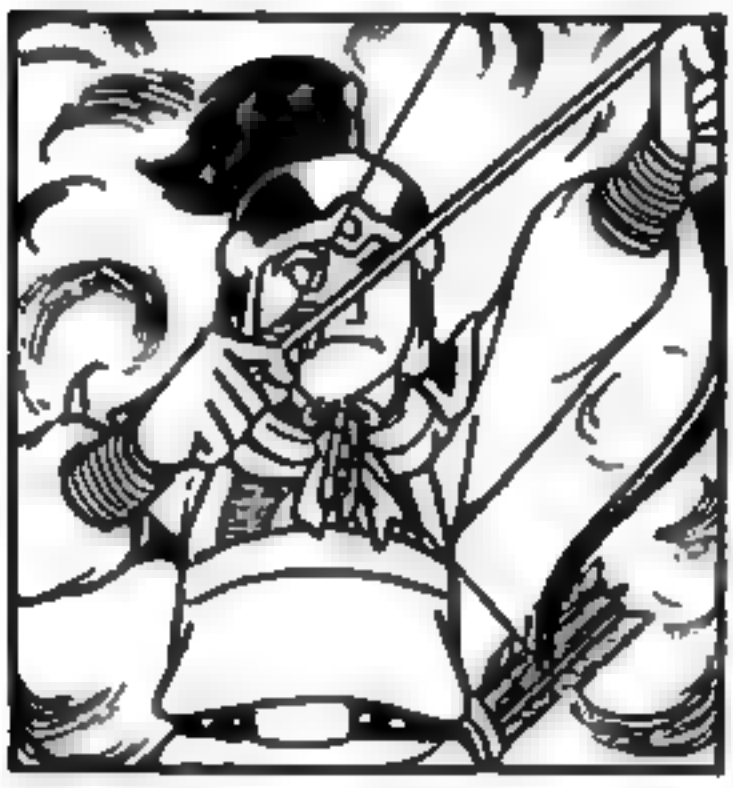
STOP RIGHT THERE!

MOVE IT!

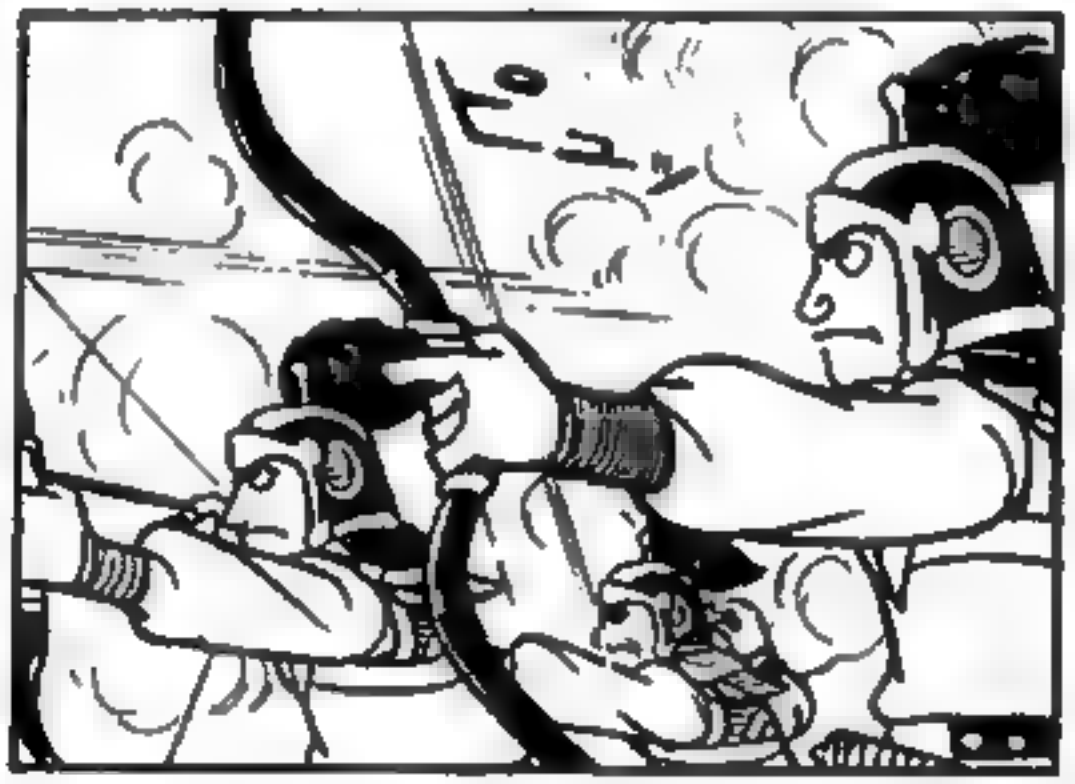
THANK YOU.

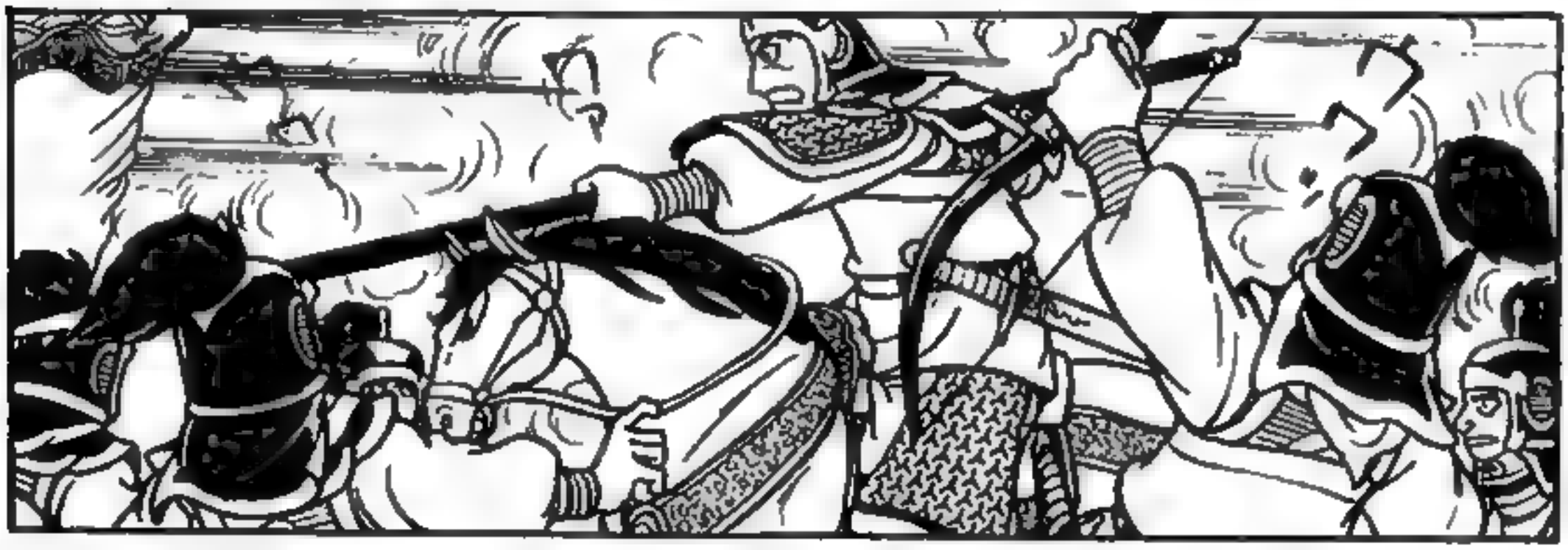
WE SHALL HOLD THEM OFF HERE TEMPORARILY SO PLEASE RETREAT TO SAFETY, COMMANDER!

DON'T LET HIM ESCAPE!



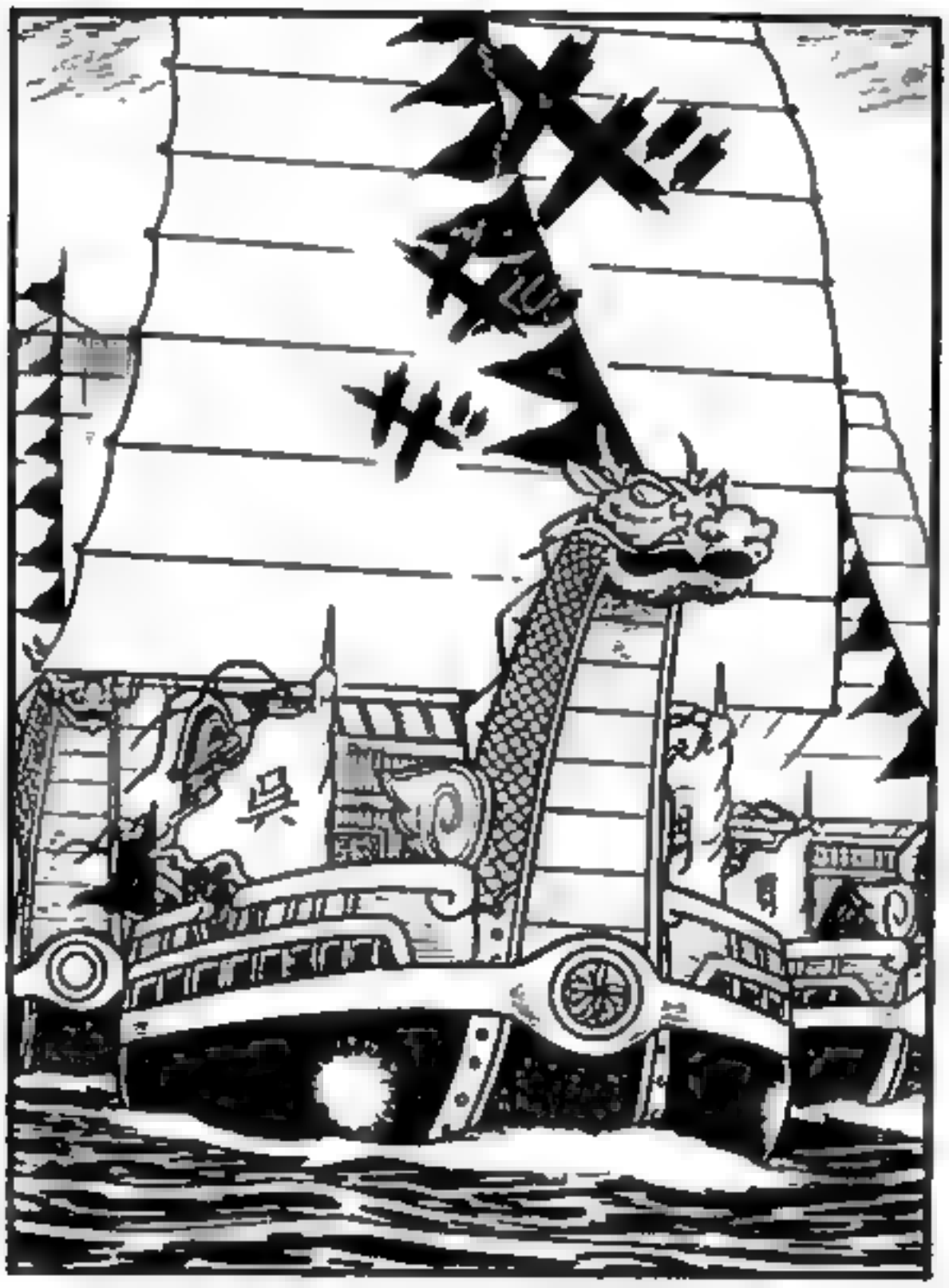
AS IF WE'LL ALLOW YOU!

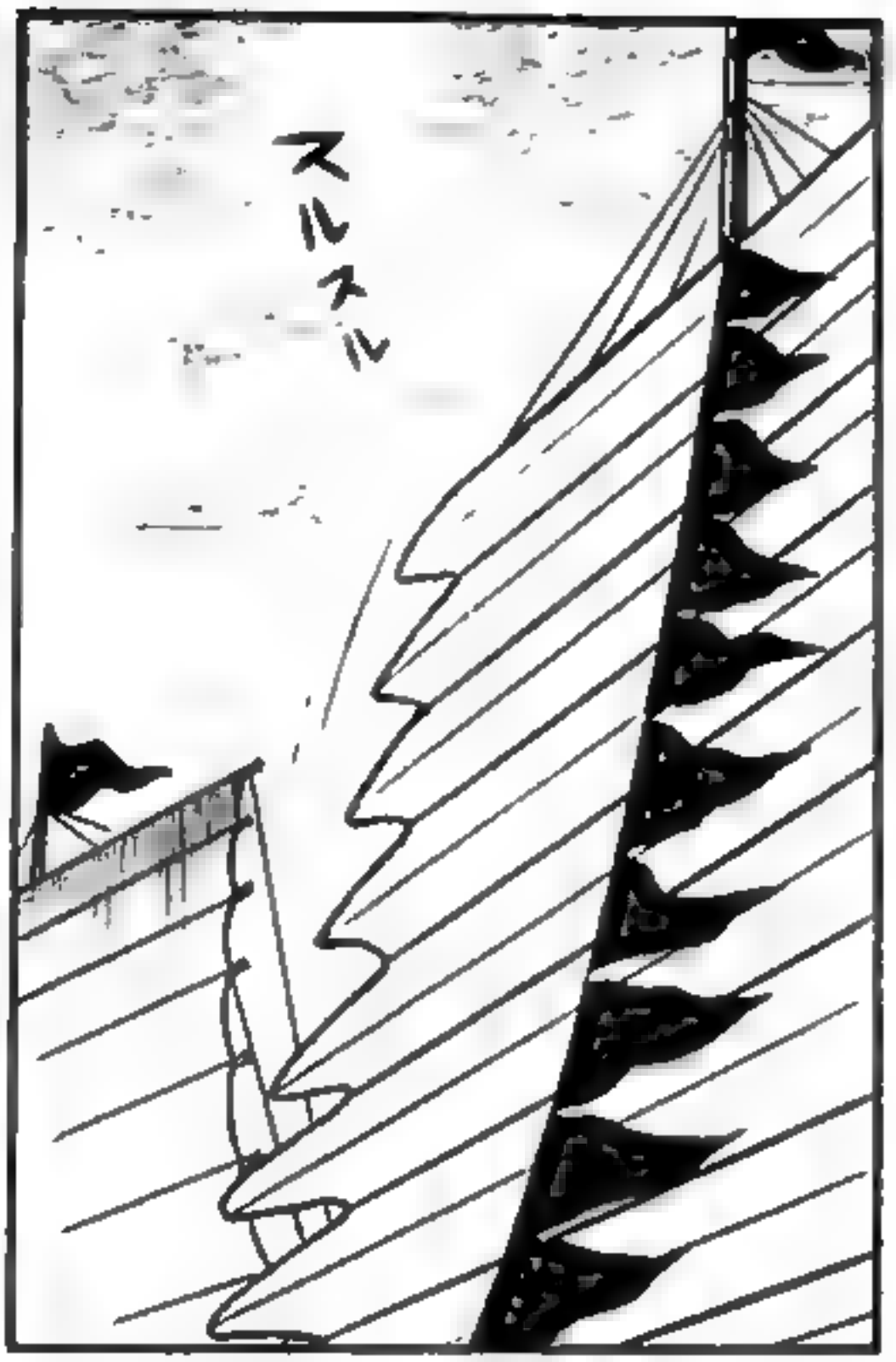




RAISE THE SAILS!

QUICKLY! BEFORE THE ENEMIES ARRIVE!

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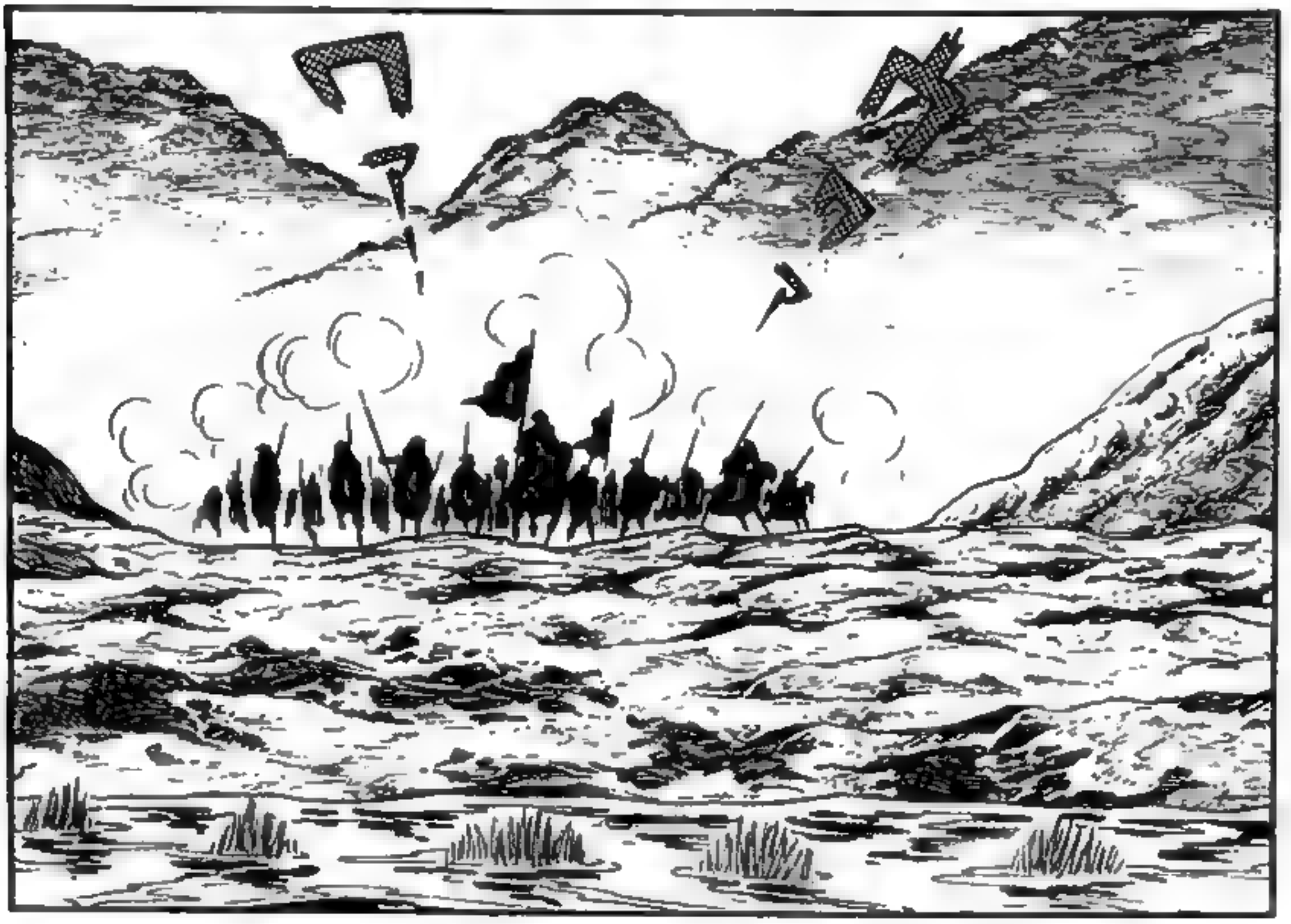
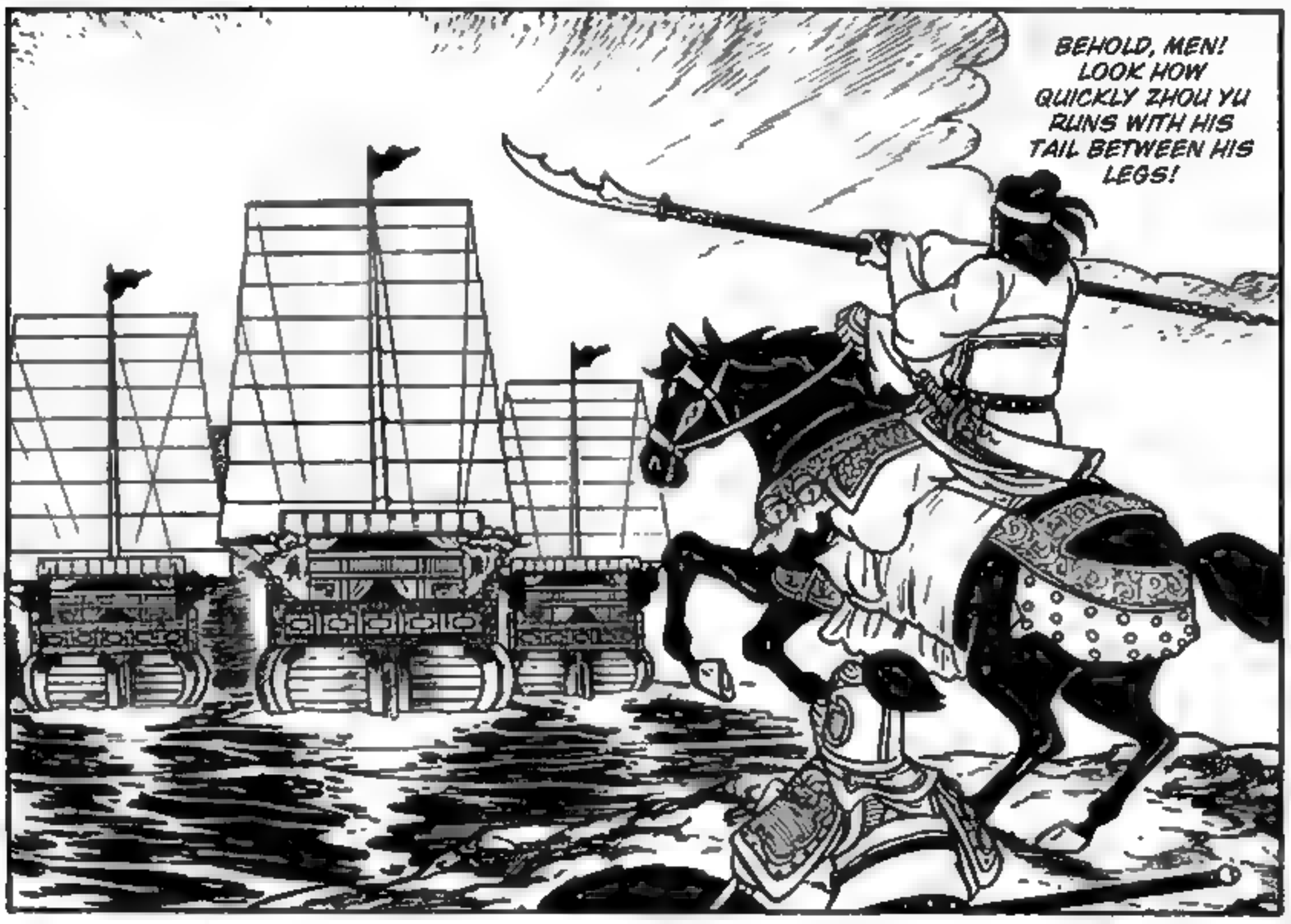
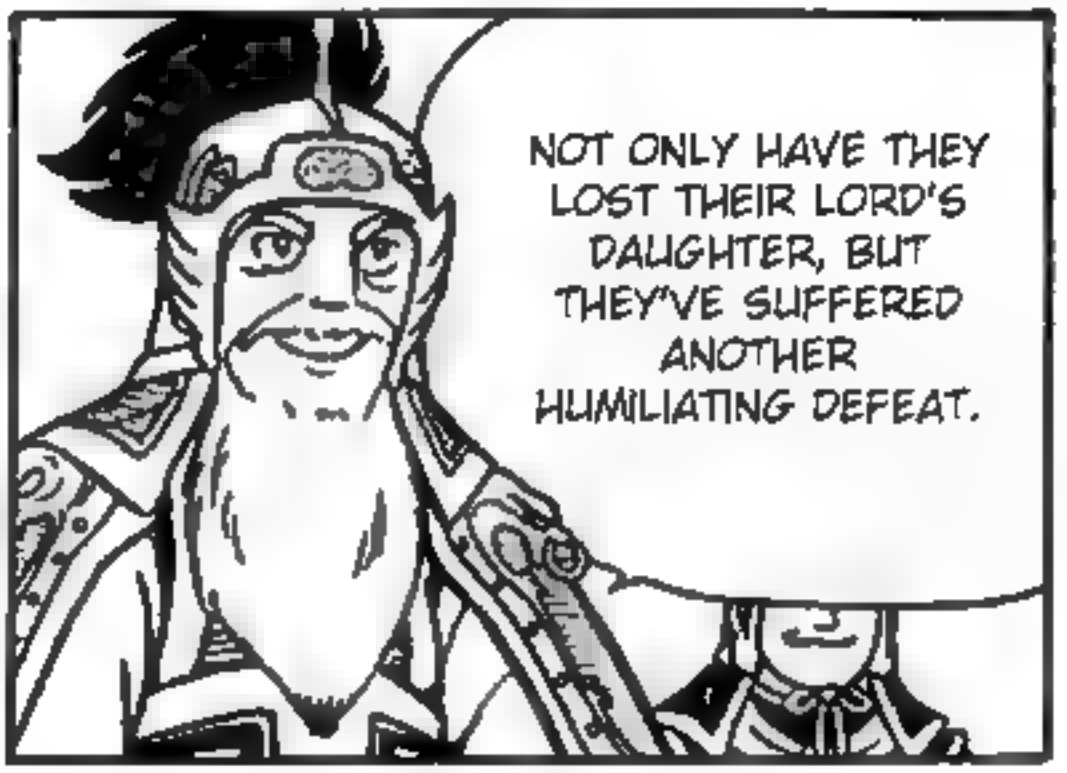


COWARDS!


BEHOLD, MEN! LOOK HOW QUICKLY ZHOU YU RUNS WITH HIS TAIL BETWEEN HIS LEGS!

HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA


NOT ONLY HAVE THEY LOST THEIR LORD'S DAUGHTER, BUT THEY'VE SUFFERED ANOTHER HUMILIATING DEFEAT.

TURN THE SHIPS AROUND! WE MUST TEACH THEM A LESSON!

HOW DARE THEY MOCK US...

PLEASE CALM DOWN, COMMANDER. TO SEND OUR TROOPS IN THIS SITUATION TO ANOTHER BATTLE WOULD BE SENDING THEM TO THEIR DEATHS.

MNN...

HA HA HA HA HA

DO THEY EVEN KNOW HOW TO FIGHT!?

HA HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA HA

LOOK AT THEM RUN!

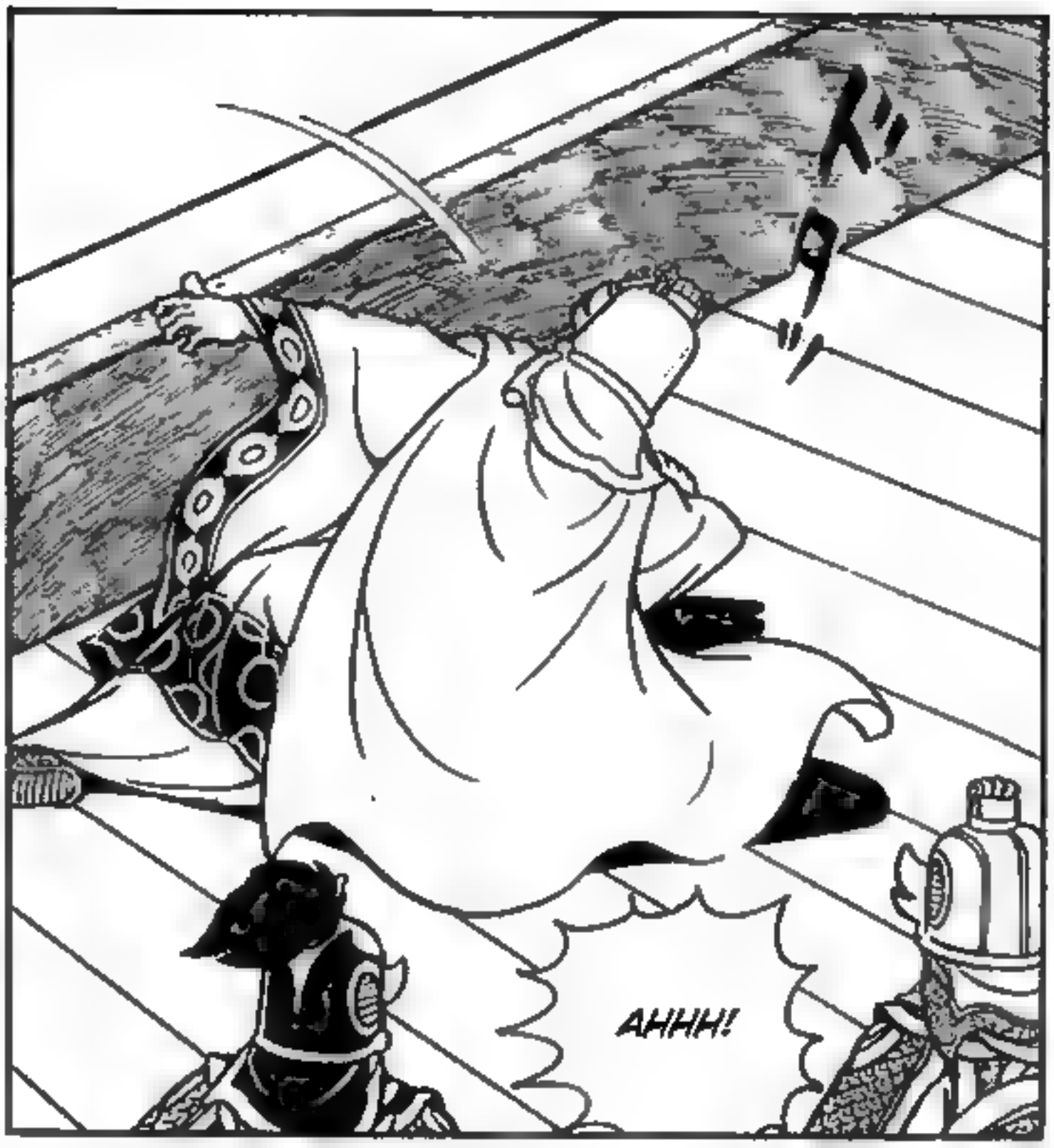
HOW CAN I LIVE WITH THIS DIS-GRACE...

DAMN... HOW CAN I, THE SUPREME COMMANDER OF WU, RETURN WITH SUCH HUMILIATING LOSSES AND RESULTS...

ゴボ"!

MNNF!

SIR!
SIR!


AHHH!

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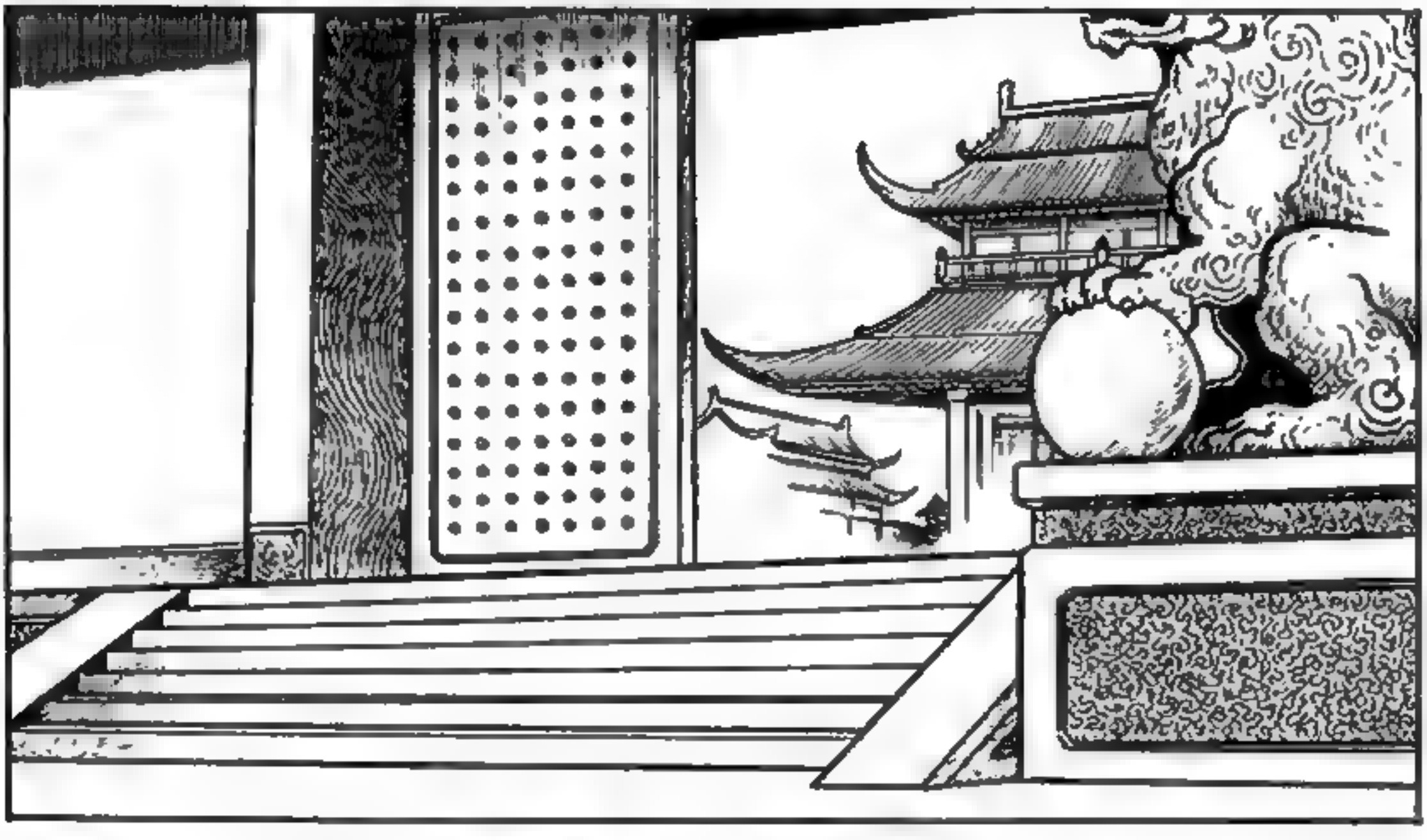
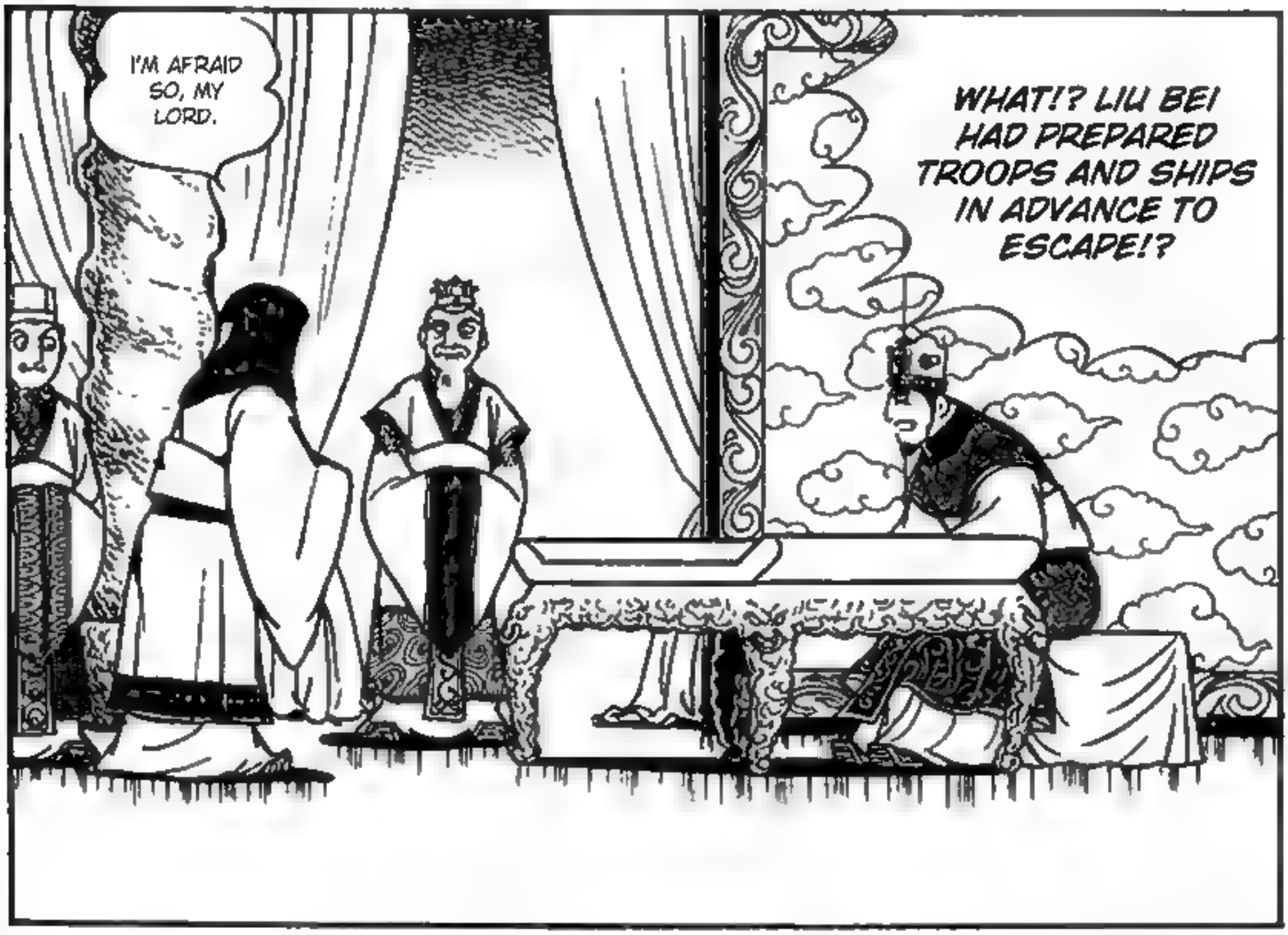
HAVE THE SHIPS SAIL AT FULL SPEED BACK TO CHAISANG.

YES...

BRONZE BIRD TERRACE





I'M AFRAID HIS ILLNESS HAS BEEN AGGRAVATED DUE TO ALL THE STRESS AND SO HE NOW LIES SICK IN BED.

AND WHAT ABOUT ZHOU YU?

I SWEAR I'LL KILL LIU BEI FOR THIS!

THIS IS UN-ACCEPTABLE!

Y-YES, SIR.

MOBILIZE MY TROOPS FOR A CAMPAIGN TO CONQUER JINGZHOU!

I TRULY DO SYMPATHIZE WITH YOUR ANGER BUT YOU MUST THINK CALMLY AND RATIONALLY.

WHAT!?

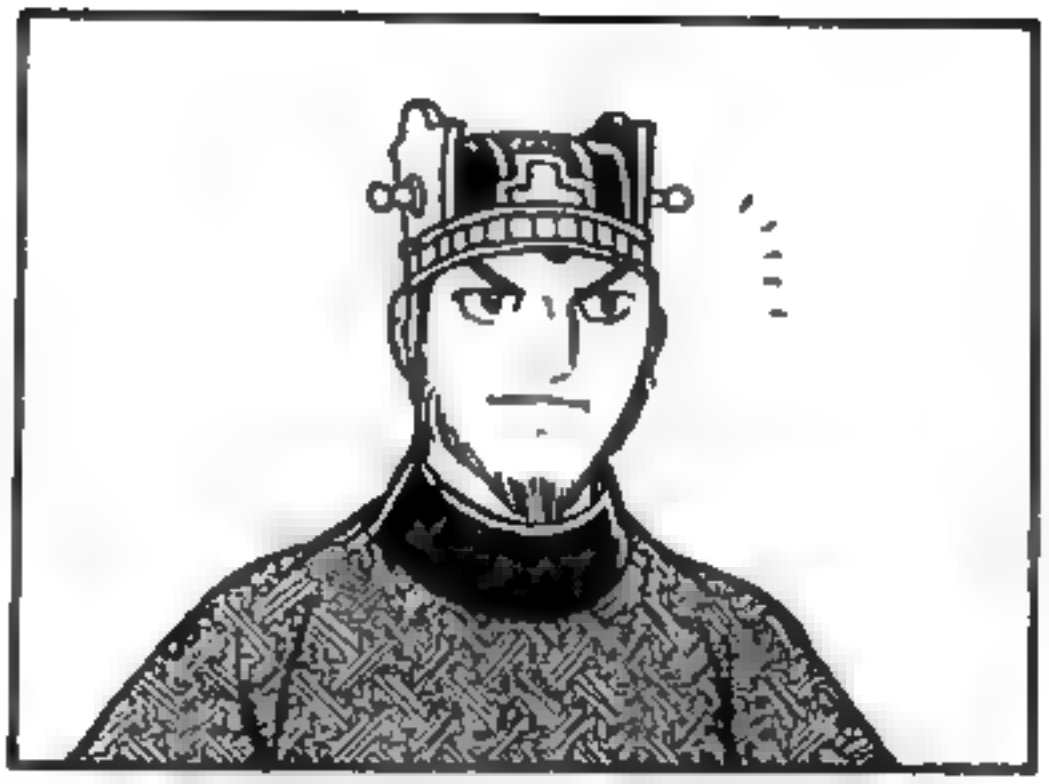
I STRONGLY ADVISE AGAINST THAT, MY LORD.

ALLOW ME TO REMIND MY LORD THAT CAO CAO IS SPENDING EVERY DAY AND NIGHT ON REBUILDING HIS FORCES TO AVENGE HIS DEFEAT AT RED CLIFFS.

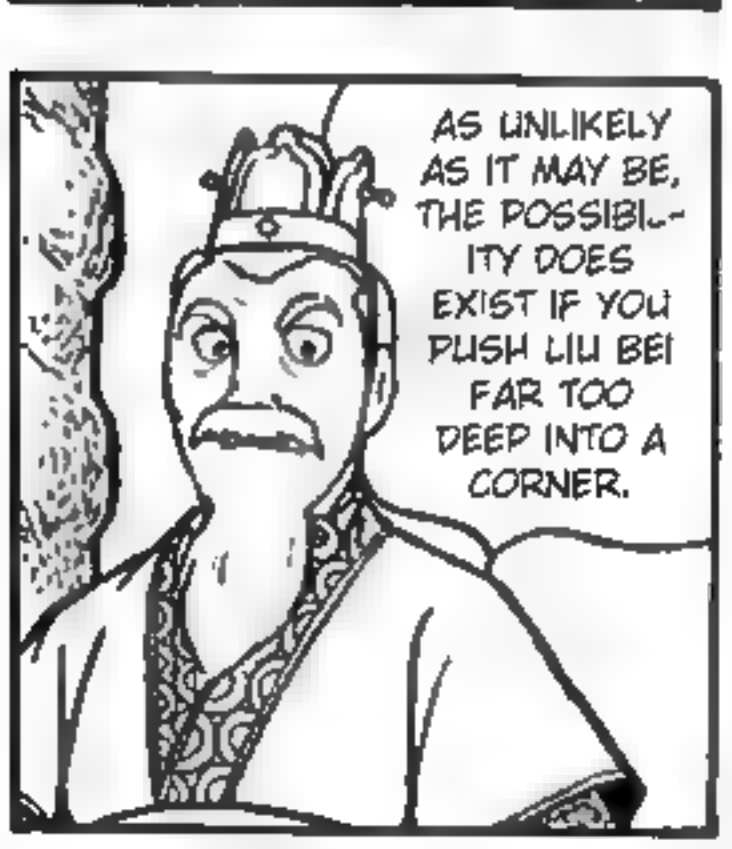
HOWEVER, IF HE WERE TO HEAR THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN LIU BEI AND YOU HAVE SOURED, HE IS SURELY TO LAUNCH ANOTHER OFFENSIVE AT ONCE.

HOWEVER, THAT IS NOT TO IMPLY THAT HE IS PRESENTLY TOO WEAK TO ATTACK WU, NOR INTIMIDATED BY OUR STRENGTH ALONE. THE REAL REASON HE HAS YET TO MAKE ANOTHER MOVE IS THAT HE DOES NOT WISH TO FIGHT AGAINST BOTH MY LORD AND LIU BEI IF POSSIBLE.

HMM...


...

AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN CAO CAO AND LIU BEI!? T-THAT'S CRAZY!


AS UNLIKELY AS IT MAY BE, THE POSSIBL-ITY DOES EXIST IF YOU PUSH LIU BEI FAR TOO DEEP INTO A CORNER.

WHAT!?
CAO CAO IS SURE TO HAVE HIS SPIES PLACED IN ALL CORNERS OF THESE LANDS AS HE BIDES HIS TIME. IF HE HEARS THAT WU IS PLANNING TO ATTACK LIU BEI, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY HE MAY THEN TRY TO BRING LIU BEI TO HIS SIDE.

THEN WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?
AND WU'S FATE WOULD BE A CANDLE FLAME BEFORE A STRONG GUST IF SUCH A SCENARIO DOES COME TRUE.

THAT WOULD BE THE SAME AS GIVING UP MY CLAIM ON JINGZHOU!

WHAT!?

PLEASE SEND A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION TO THE IMPERIAL COURT, ASKING LIU BEI TO BE OFFICIALLY INSTATED AS THE IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF JINGZHOU.

PATIENCE AND MODESTY IS THE KEY TO DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS, MY LORD.

THE BIG PICTURE?

YOU MUST TRY TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE HERE.

I SEE...

THIS RECOMMENDATION WILL CAUSE CAO CAO TO THINK RELATIONS BETWEEN MY LORD AND LIU BEI ARE CLOSER THAN EVER, AS WELL AS MAKING LIU BEI BE IN YOUR DEBT.

HMM...

AND ONCE THAT'S DONE, YOU MUST TRY TO SECRETLY PIT CAO CAO AGAINST LIU BEI BY PLACING AGENTS OF YOUR OWN IN THE IMPERIAL COURT AT XUCHANG. A WAR BETWEEN THOSE TWO WILL BE THE ONLY WAY TO EFFECTIVELY DRAIN LIU BEI'S STRENGTH SO THAT WE CAN CAPTURE JINGZHOU WITH LITTLE RISK.

HUA XIN, COURTESY NAME ZIYU, WILL BE PERFECT FOR THAT ROLE. FORMERLY THE GOVERNOR OF YUZHANG, HIS TALENT AND WISDOM ARE RESPECTED BY CAO CAO.

WHY YES.

BUT DO WE EVEN HAVE THE APPROPRIATE MAN TO PLAY DOUBLE-AGENT FOR US?

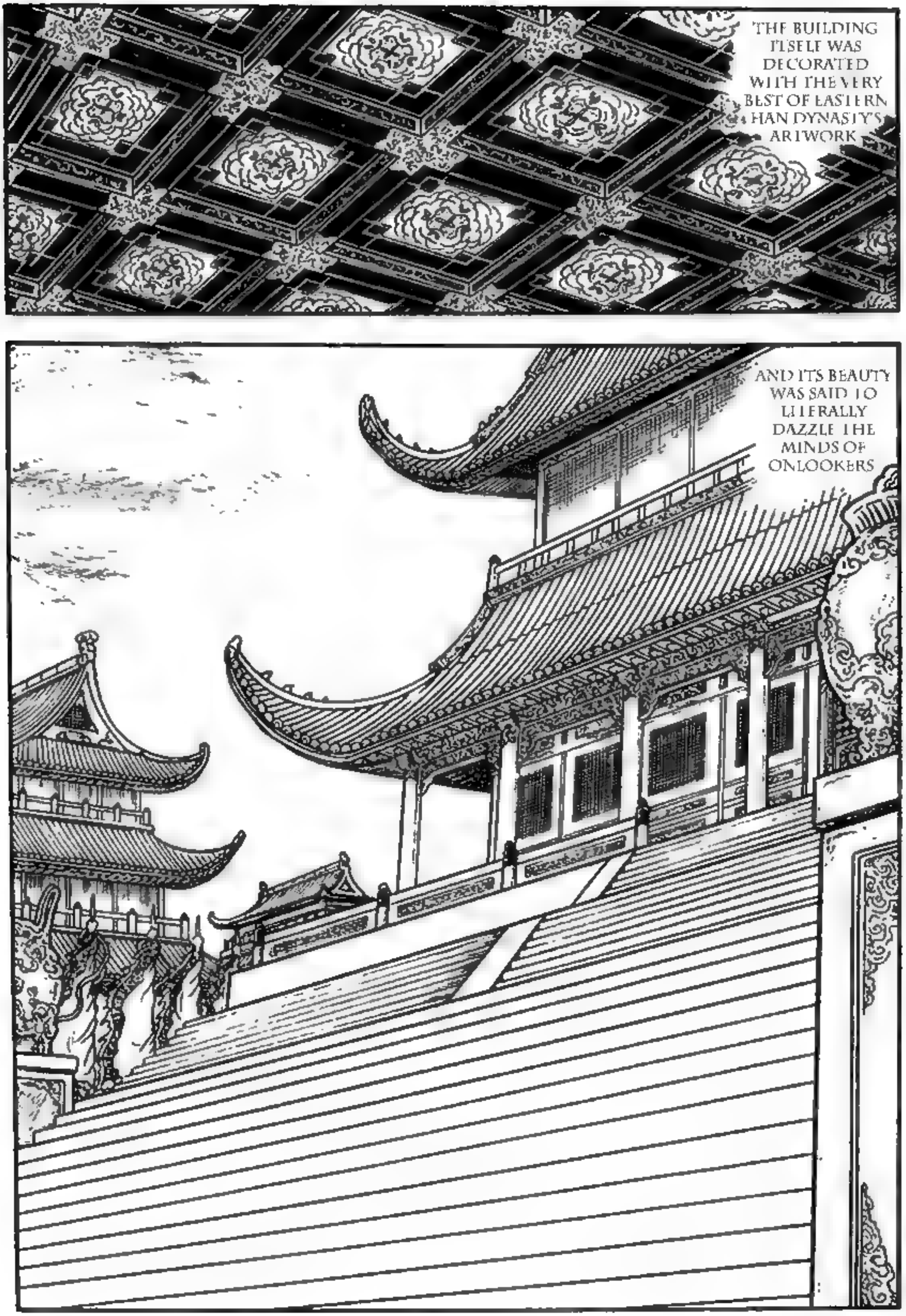
YES, MY LORD.

CALL HUA XIN AT ONCE THEN.

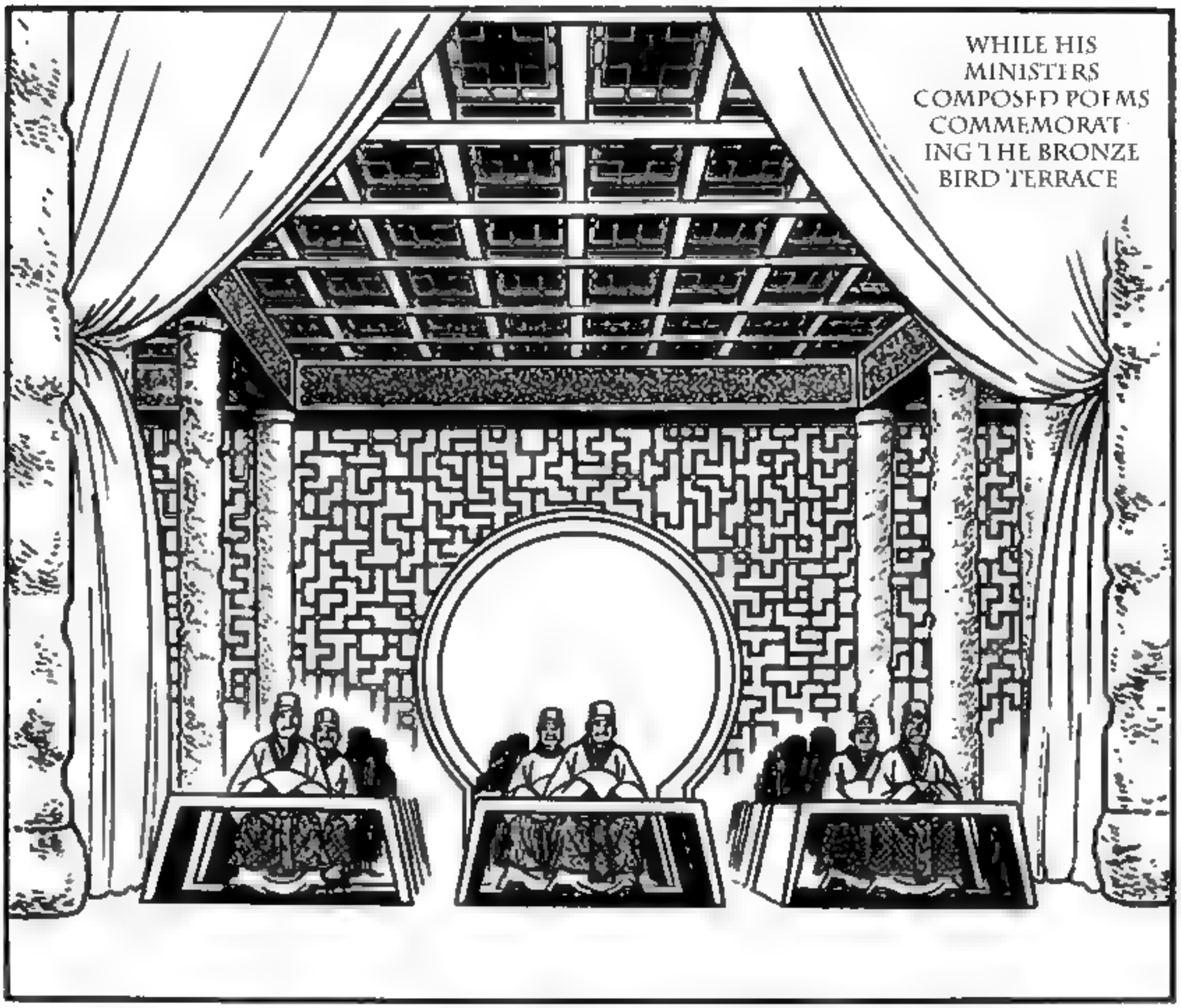
AFTER SOME DISCUSSION ON HOW TO STIR UP TROUBLE BETWEEN LIU BEI AND CAO CAO,

HUA XIN LEFT FOR XUCHANG CARRYING A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR LIU BEI.

MEANWHILE, CAO CAO WAS AT YEJUN.
YEJUN HAD FORMERLY BELONGED TO YUAN SHAO, BUT SINCE HIS DEFEAT 9 YEARS AGO, CAO CAO HAD ORDERED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GRAND TERRACE
AND AFTER 8 LONG YEARS, THE TERRACE WAS FINALLY COMPLETE


THE BUILDING ITSELF WAS DECORATED WITH THE VERY BEST OF EASTERN HAN DYNASTY'S ARTWORK
AND ITS BEAUTY WAS SAID TO LITERALLY DAZZLE THE MINDS OF ONLOOKERS

THE NAME "BRONZE BIRD TERRACE" ORIGINATED FROM THE DISCOVERY OF A BRONZE BIRD FIGURINE WHERE THE VERY TERRACE WAS BUILT UPON
TO CELEBRATE ITS GLORIOUS COMPLETION, CAO CAO'S GENERALS PARTICIPATED IN ARCHERY COMPETITIONS,


WHILE HIS MINISTERS COMPOSED POEMS COMMEMORATING THE BRONZE BIRD TERRACE

FROM A GLANCE, IT WAS AS IF THE PAST DEFEAT AT RED CLIFFS HAD DONE LITTLE TO UNDERMINE CAO CAO'S POWER.

YES, SIR.

BRING ME MY INK-STONE AND BRUSH.

I CAN'T BE BESTED BY MY OWN MEN NOW. I SHALL COMPOSE A POEM MYSELF AS WELL.

A SOLI-TARY AS-CENSION,

HMM, HOW ABOUT...

TO SEE THE WHOLE WORLD BELOW MY FEET...

WHAT IS IT?

PARDON MY INTRUSION, CHANCELLOR.

NOT ONLY THAT, A WEDDING WAS RECENTLY HELD BETWEEN SUN QUAN'S LITTLE SISTER AND LIU BEI. AS FOR THE DOWRY, SUN QUAN HAS GIVEN LIU BEI 9 COMMANDERIES OF JINGZHOU.

WHAT!?

A MAN NAMED HUA XIN HAS COME TO PRESENT A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION WRITTEN BY SUN QUAN, ASKING THE IMPERIAL COURT TO OFFICIALLY INSTATE LIU BEI AS THE IMPERIAL PROTECTOR OF JINGZHOU.

ポトッ

WHA!?

CHENG YU! HOW COULD I ***NOT*** BE SHOCKED BY THIS NEWS!?

WHAT TROUBLES MY IMPERTURBABLE CHANCELLOR SO?

NOT ONLY THAT, A SECURE ALLIANCE BETWEEN LIU BEI AND SUN QUAN WILL BE A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE IN MY GOAL TO PACIFY ALL THE FORMER TERRITORIES OF HAN.

AS I'VE SAID BEFORE, LIU BEI IS A DRAGON TRAPPED IN A SMALL GROTTO. BUT IF HE FINALLY HAS A PLACE TO CALL HIS OWN SUCH AS JINGZHOU, THEN THE DRAGON HAS FINALLY BEEN SET LOOSE!

YOU MEAN TO IMPLY YOU HAVE A GOOD PLAN FOR THAT?

THEN OUR COURSE OF ACTION IS SIMPLE. WE MUST FIRST DISTANCE THOSE TWO FROM EACH OTHER.

YES, OF COURSE. YOU MUST FIRST REALIZE THAT THEIR ALLIANCE IS NOT AS STRONG AS ONE WOULD NORMALLY THINK. SUN QUAN HAS ALWAYS THOUGHT OF LIU BEI AS A THREAT AND WISHES TO TAKE ALL OF JINGZHOU FOR HIMSELF. HOWEVER, THE THREAT OF YOUR ARMIES ATTACKING FROM THE NORTH HAS STOPPED HIM FROM DOING SO. THIS LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION IS SIMPLY A BLUFF OF HIS TO PREVENT MY LORD FROM LAUNCHING ANOTHER OFFENSIVE.

THUS, THIS WILL PUT YET ANOTHER STRAIN UPON THEIR RELATIONS AND IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THEY BREAK DOWN COMPLETELY.

AND SO, I PROPOSE SIR TO INSTATE ZHOU YU AS THE GOVERNOR OF NANJUN, AND CHENG PU AS THE GOVERNOR OF JIANGXIA. BOTH NANJUN AND JIANGXIA CURRENTLY BELONG TO LIU BEI WHO, OF COURSE, WILL NOT WILLINGLY HAND THEM OVER.

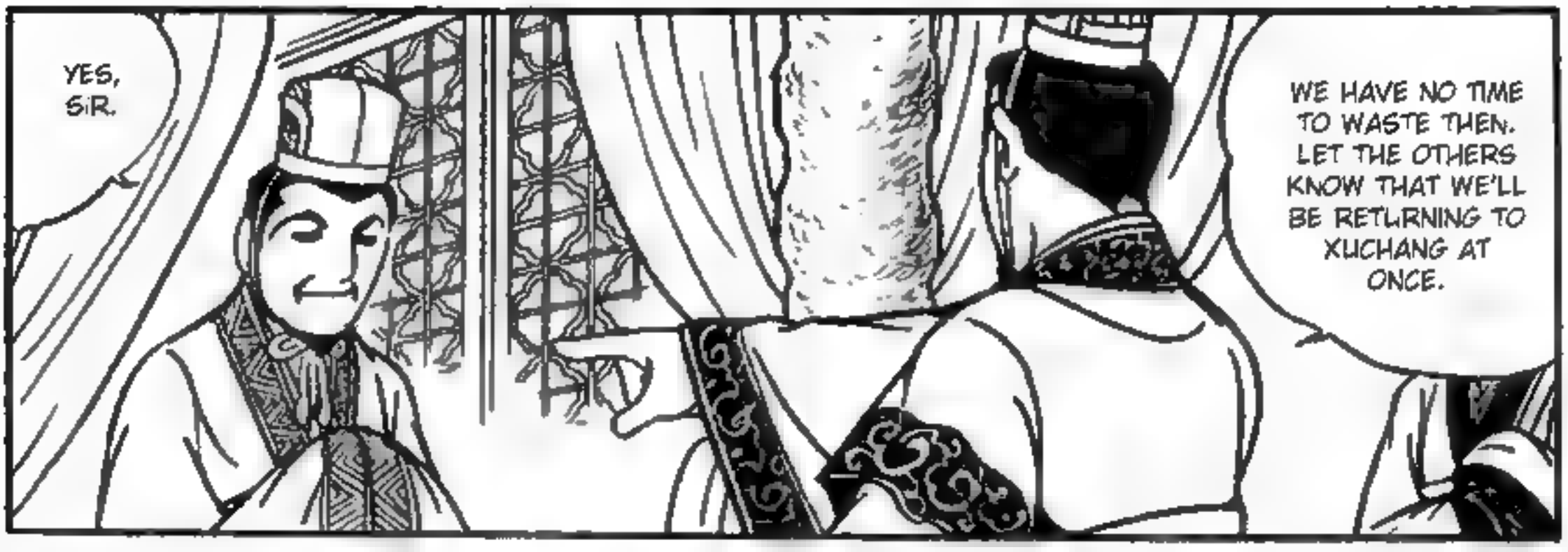
OF COURSE, WU'S AGENT HUA XIN WILL STRONGLY OPPOSE THIS DECREE.

EXACTLY, CHANCELLOR.

AND THEN THAT WOULD BE MY CHANCE TO STRIKE?

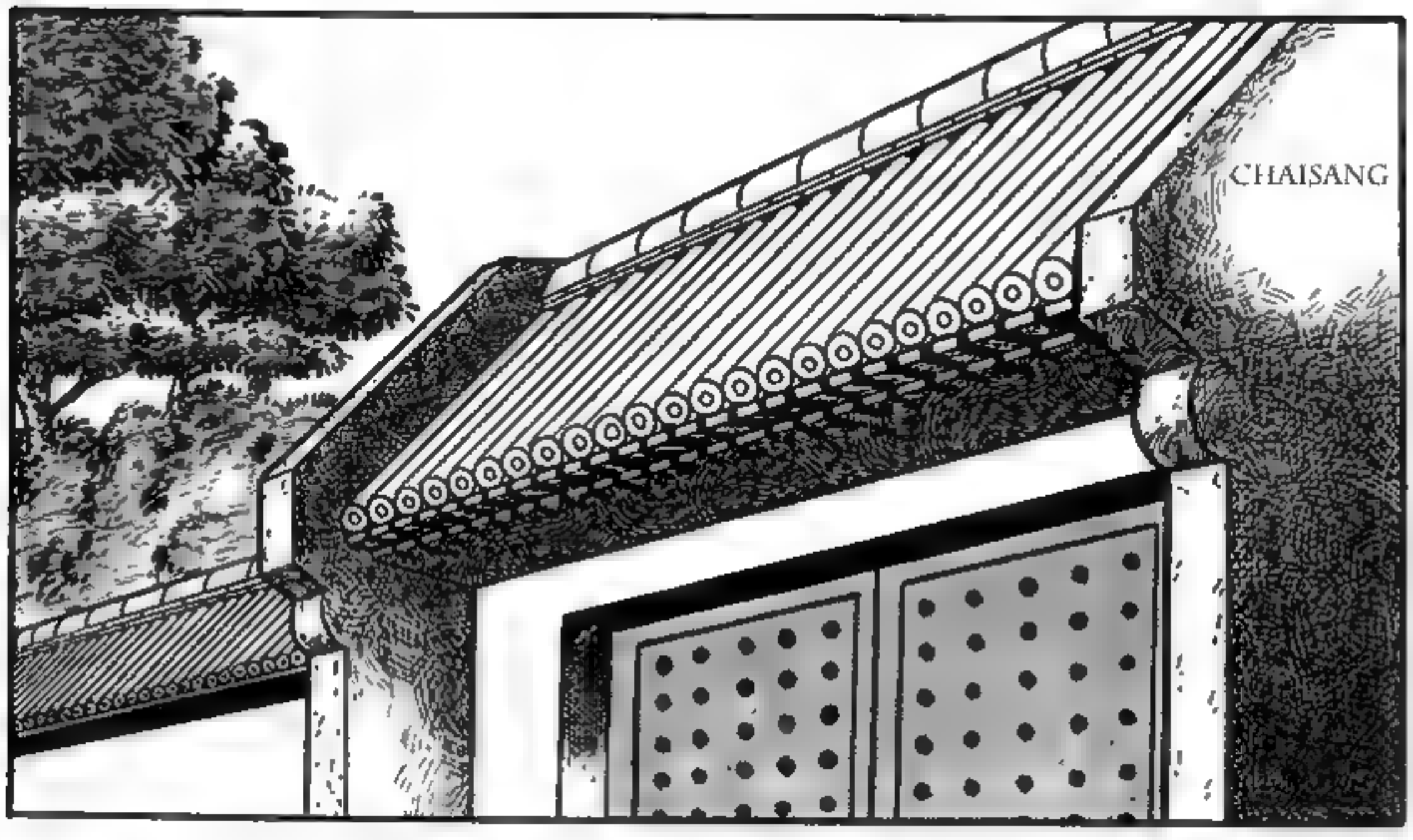
EXCELLENT IDEA.

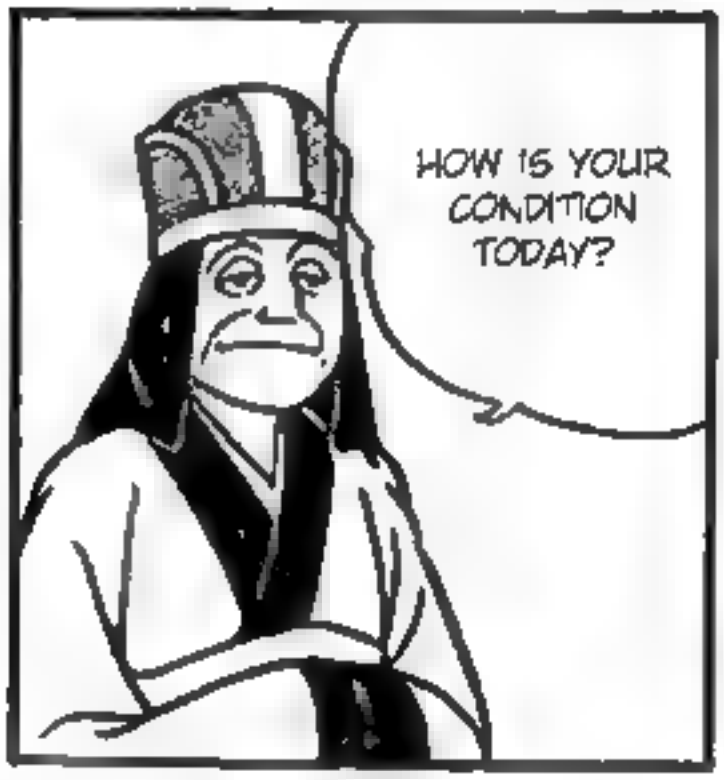
AND SO, PLEASE GIVE HUA XIN SOME OTHER POST TO KEEP HIM IN THE CAPITAL, WHILE SENDING SOME OTHER MESSENGER TO INFORM ZHOU YU AND CHENG PU OF THEIR NEW STATUS AS GOVERNORS.



WITH THE CELEBRATION CUT SHORT BY THIS PIECE OF NEWS, CAO CAO NOW HURRIED BACK TO THE CAPITAL.

BACK-AND-FORTH





AN IMPERIAL MESSENGER HAS COME FROM XUCHANG.

WHAT?

WHAT IS IT?

EXCUSE ME, SIR.

YES, SIR.

MAKE SURE TO NOT OFFEND HIM IN ANY WAY.

YES, SIR.

BRING ME MY ROBES.

I COME BEARING AN IMPERIAL DECREE.

IT IS MY HONOUR TO WELCOME YOU. I AM ZHOU YU.

FROM TODAY FORTH, YOU ARE APPOINTED AS THE GOVERNOR OF NANJUN.

BE SURE TO CARRY OUT YOUR NEW DUTIES WELL.

YES!

THAT IS ALL.

I THANK HIS HIGHNESS.

ME? THE GOVERNOR OF NANJUN?

HMM...

HM?

PARDON THE INTRUSION MY LORD, BUT COMMANDER ZHOU YU HAS JUST SENT YOU AN URGENT MESSAGE.

I HAVE JUST RECEIVED AN IMPERIAL DECREE WHICH APPOINTS ME AS THE GOVERNOR OF NANJUN.

HMM, WHAT TO DO...

HOWEVER, NANJUN CURRENTLY BELONGS TO LIU BEI, WHO IS NOW MY LORD'S BROTHER-IN-LAW. AND SO, IF I WERE TO FOLLOW THE DECREE AND TAKE OVER NANJUN BY FORCE, THE PEOPLE WILL CALL ME A TRAITOR TO MY LORD, WHILE IF I IGNORE THE DECREE, I WOULD BE LABELLED AS A REBEL TO HAN. I NOW WRITE TO MY LORD IN ADVICE FOR WHICH ACTION I SHOULD TAKE...

WELL, THERE WAS THAT CONTRACT HE SIGNED ABOUT RETURNING JINGZHOU ONCE HE OBTAINS SHU.

ZHOU YU IS IN A PREDICAMENT AND LIU BEI IS UNLIKELY TO HAND OVER JING-ZHOU WILLINGLY...

WHAT USE IS THAT PHONY CONTRACT WHEN LIU BEI STILL HASN'T SENT EVEN A SINGLE SOLDIER TO SHU!? DO YOU EXPECT ME TO WAIT UNTIL MY HAIR TURNS GREY!?

YES, SIR.

FINE, BUT YOU BETTER BRING BACK SOMETHING OF WORTH THIS TIME.

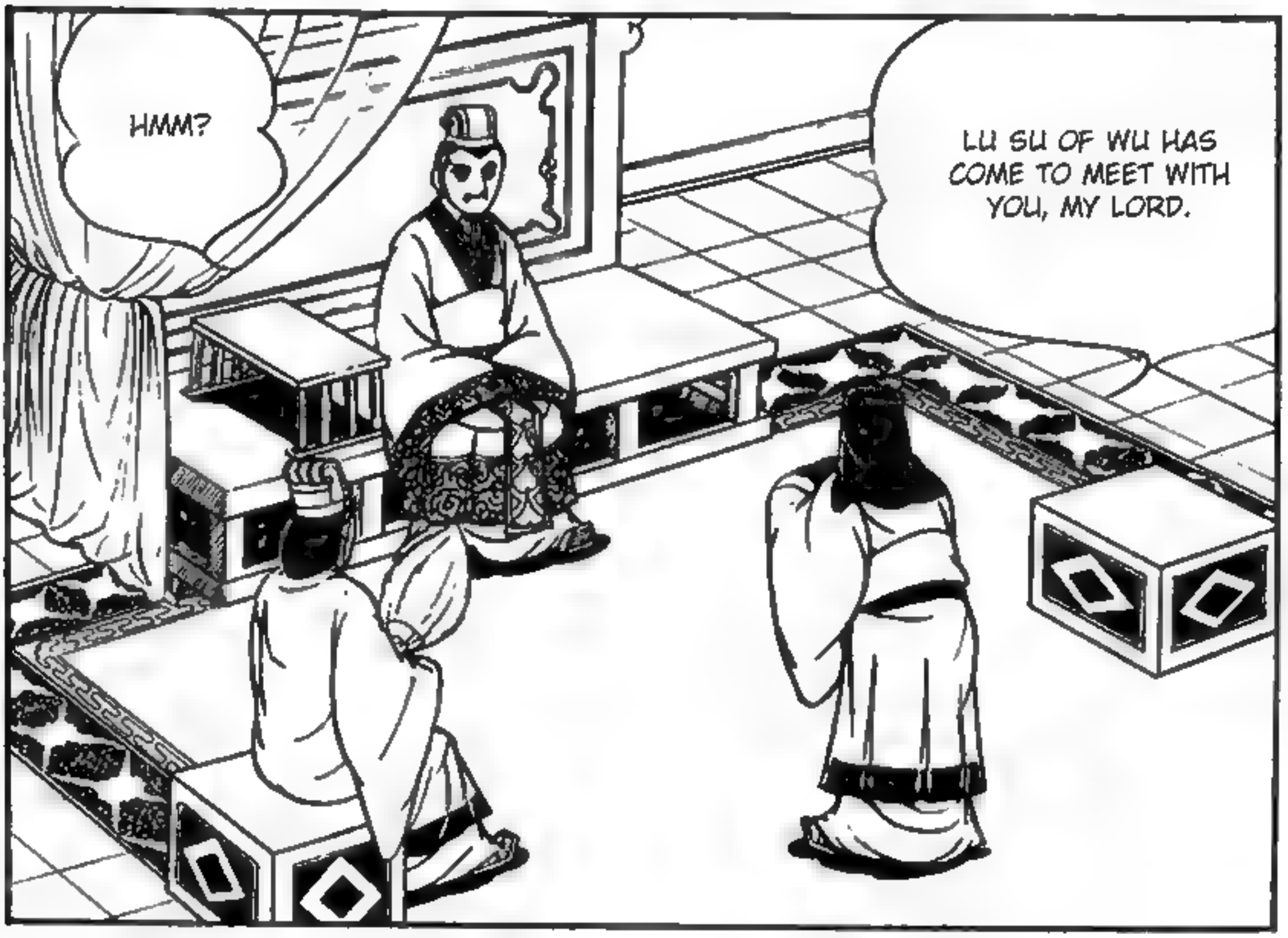
I-IT IS MY FAULT. PLEASE ALLOW ME TO TRY AND PERSUADE LIU BEI ONCE MORE.

YES, SIR.

THEN DEPART AT ONCE!

LU SU QUICKLY SAILED FOR JINGZHOU AGAIN.

JINGZHOU


HMM?
LU SU OF WU HAS COME TO MEET WITH YOU, MY LORD.

THEN HOW SHOULD I ANSWER TO HIM THIS TIME?

FOR JING-ZHOU, OF COURSE.

WHY WOULD LU SU COME...?

IT'S ALL FOR A LITTLE PLAY WE'RE ABOUT TO PERFORM FOR HIM.

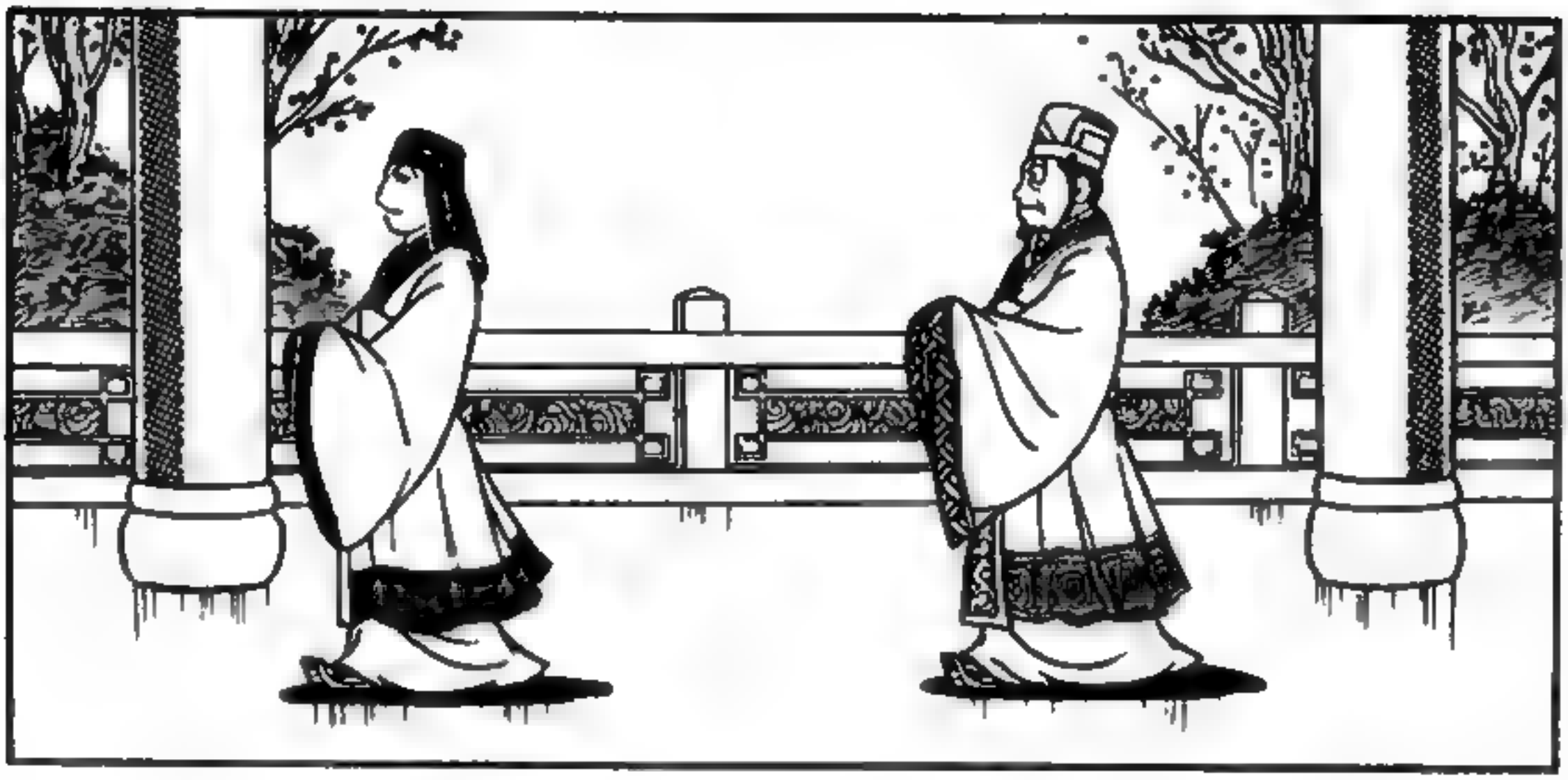
YOU WANT ME TO CRY IN FRONT OF ANOTHER MAN?

WHEN HE MENTIONS JINGZHOU, PLEASE BURST OUT INTO LOUD WAILING.

THEN WHAT COMES NEXT?

FINE, I'LL DO AS YOU SAY.

JUST LEAVE THE REST TO ME.



THE SAME TO YOU, SIR.
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, LU SU.

WELL, IF I WERE TO TELL YOU I'M HERE AGAIN ON MY LORD'S ORDERS, I'M SURE YOU'LL KNOW WHAT I'VE COME FOR.

SO WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?

NOW THAT YOU AND MY LORD ARE OF ONE FAMILY, TO DELAY FULFILLING YOUR PROMISE TO RETURN JINGZHOU WILL NOT ONLY SOUR OUR RELATIONS BUT WILL HAVE YOU LABELLED AS AN IMMORAL BROTHER BY THE PEOPLE.

YES, SIR.

JING-ZHOU, I PRE-SUME?

UU...!

YES, I'M WELL AWARE OF THAT BUT... BUT...

W-WHAT'S THE MATTER, SIR?

ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN.

KONGMING!

IT SEEMS YOU'RE CONFUSED AS TO WHY MY LORD IS CRYING, LU SU.

ALTHOUGH MY LORD HAS PROMISED TO RETURN JINGZHOU WHEN HE OBTAINS SHU, ITS CURRENT OWNER, LIU ZHANG OF YIZHOU, IS OF THE SAME LIU FAMILY AS MY LORD. THEREFORE, IF MY LORD WAGES WAR NOW WITHOUT EVEN A PROPER CASUS BELLI, HE WILL BE DENOUNCED BY THE ENTIRE WORLD AS A BLOODTHIRSTY TYRANT.

I SEE...

BUT IF HE RETURNS JINGZHOU TO SUN QUAN RIGHT NOW, HE WILL AGAIN BECOME HOMELESS.

IF YOU UNDERSTAND, WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO RETURN AND EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO SUN QUAN AS WELL?

YES, IT MUST BE QUITE A DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR YOUR LORD...

IF I RETURN EMPTY-HANDED AGAIN, I WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO LOOK AT MY LORD IN THE FACE.

N-NO, I REALLY CAN'T!

THOUGH HE SENDS YOU HERE TIME AND TIME AGAIN, THAT IS NOT BECAUSE HE IS HEARTLESS BUT BECAUSE HE ALSO HAS A REPUTATION TO HOLD UP AS WELL.

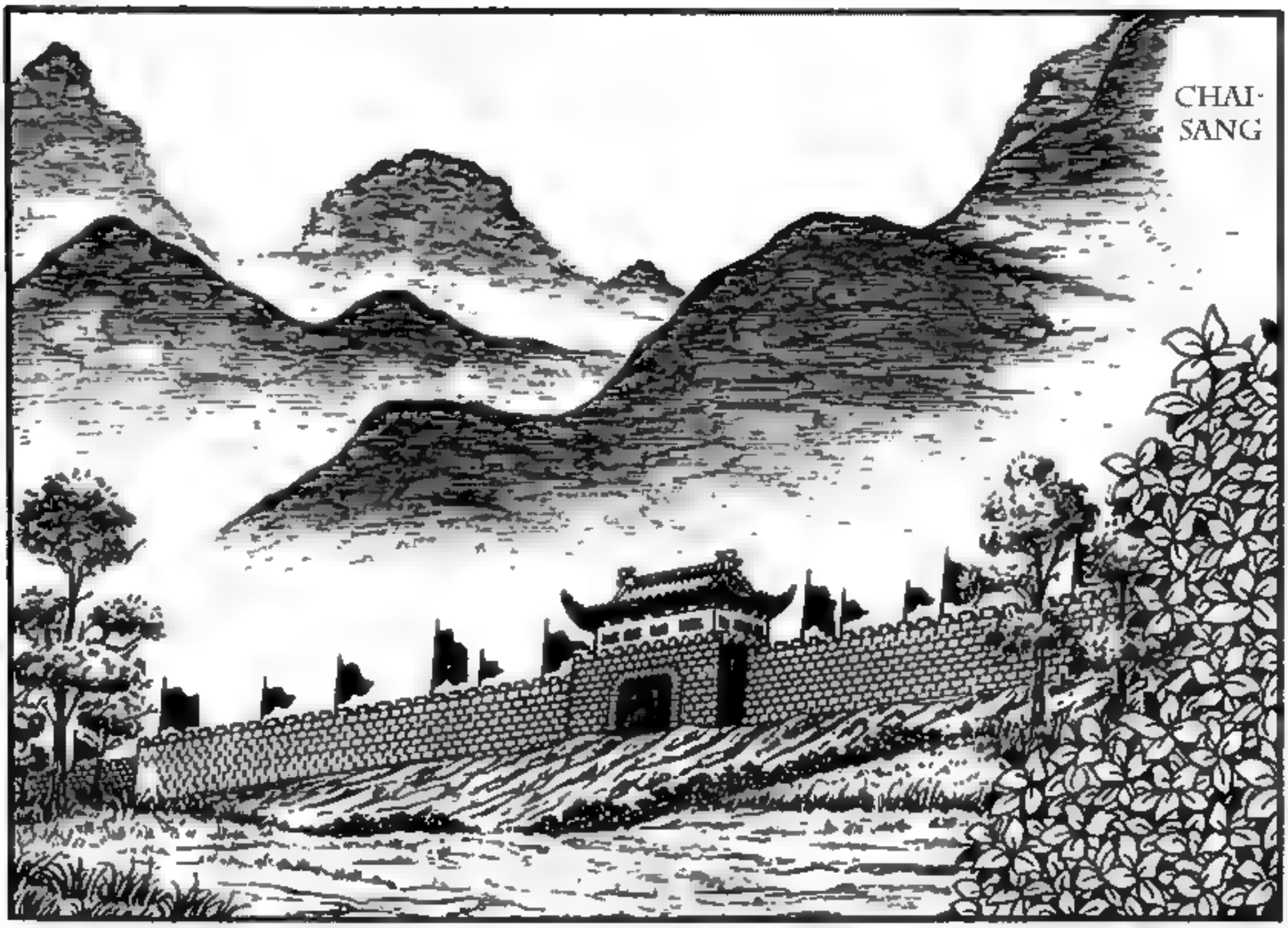
OH NO, SUN QUAN IS NOT A HEARTLESS MAN. I'M SURE HE'D SYMPATHIZE WITH THE MAN HE EVEN WED HIS LITTLE SISTER TO.

PLEASE, I BEG OF YOU...

B-BUT...

THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING, LU SU.

UMM... I... F-FINE, I'LL TRY MY BEST.


CHAI-
SANG

YES, SIR.
LU SU? YES, LET HIM IN.

SO WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?

YES, I DO FEEL A LOT BETTER.

ARE YOU FEELING ANY BETTER THESE DAYS, COMMANDER?

OH, I JUST WANTED TO DROP BY ON MY WAY BACK FROM JINGZHOU.

YES, AFTER THAT LETTER YOU SENT TO OUR LORD, I WAS SENT TO TRY AND PERSUADE LIU BEI TO RETURN JINGZHOU.

YOU WENT TO JING-ZHOU!?

WELL, HE SAID THAT HE REALLY COULDN'T BECAUSE LIU ZHANG WAS HIS FAMILY AS WELL...

AND HOW DID HE REPLY?

WELL, WHAT COULD I REALLY SAY IN THAT SITUATION?

SO YOU JUST WITHDREW LIKE THAT?

THAT FAMILY EXCUSE WAS THE SAME FOR LIU BIAO! BUT NOW LOOK WHO'S JINGZHOU'S LORD! HE CLEARLY HAS NO REAL SYMPATHY FOR LIU ZHANG, WHO'S AT BEST, AN EXTREMELY DISTANT RELATIVE.

OH, LU SU... AS CAPABLE AS YOU ARE IN OTHER MATTERS, YOU REALLY ARE RATHER LACKING IN DIPLOMATIC FINESSE.

IF YOU RETURN TO OUR LORD NOW, I'M SURE YOUR HEAD WILL FLY THIS TIME!

HE'S JUST COMING UP WITH EXCUSES ONE AFTER AN-OTHER ON HOW TO WEASEL OUT OF HIS PROMISE TO RETURN JINGZHOU.

IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN I HAVE ANOTHER PLAN.

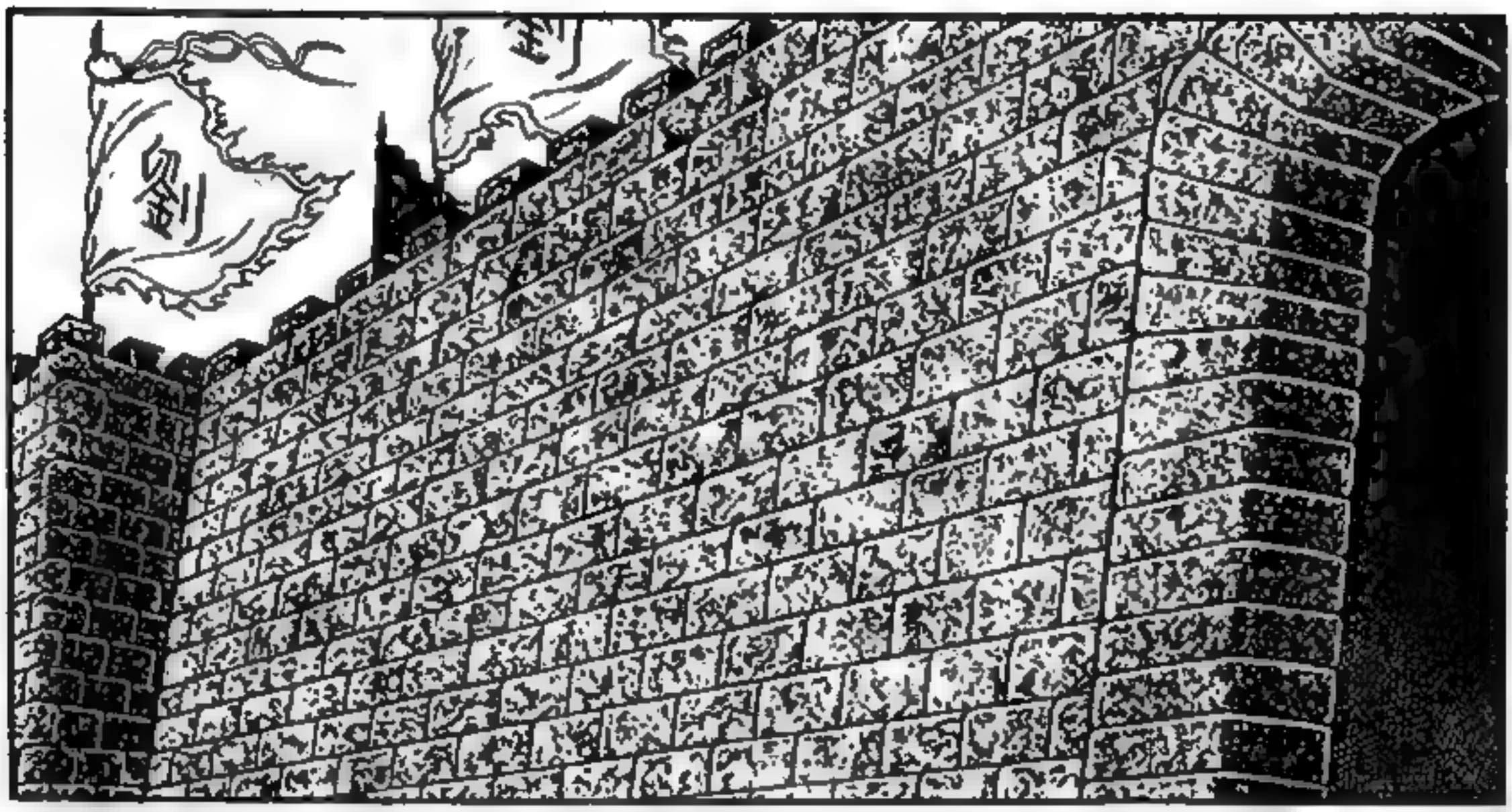
KONGMING PREVIOUSLY MOCKED ME BY SAYING IT WAS PERFECTLY FINE FOR ONE STATE TO ATTACK ANOTHER BUT TO USE THE FAIR-DAMSEL TRICK IS PITIFUL.

AH! EVEN LIU BEI NOR KONGMING WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DENY THAT OFFER.

WHISPER

LEND ME YOUR EAR.

LU SU ONCE AGAIN HEADED BACK TO JINGZHOU, THIS TIME TO SET ZHOU YU'S PLAN IN MOTION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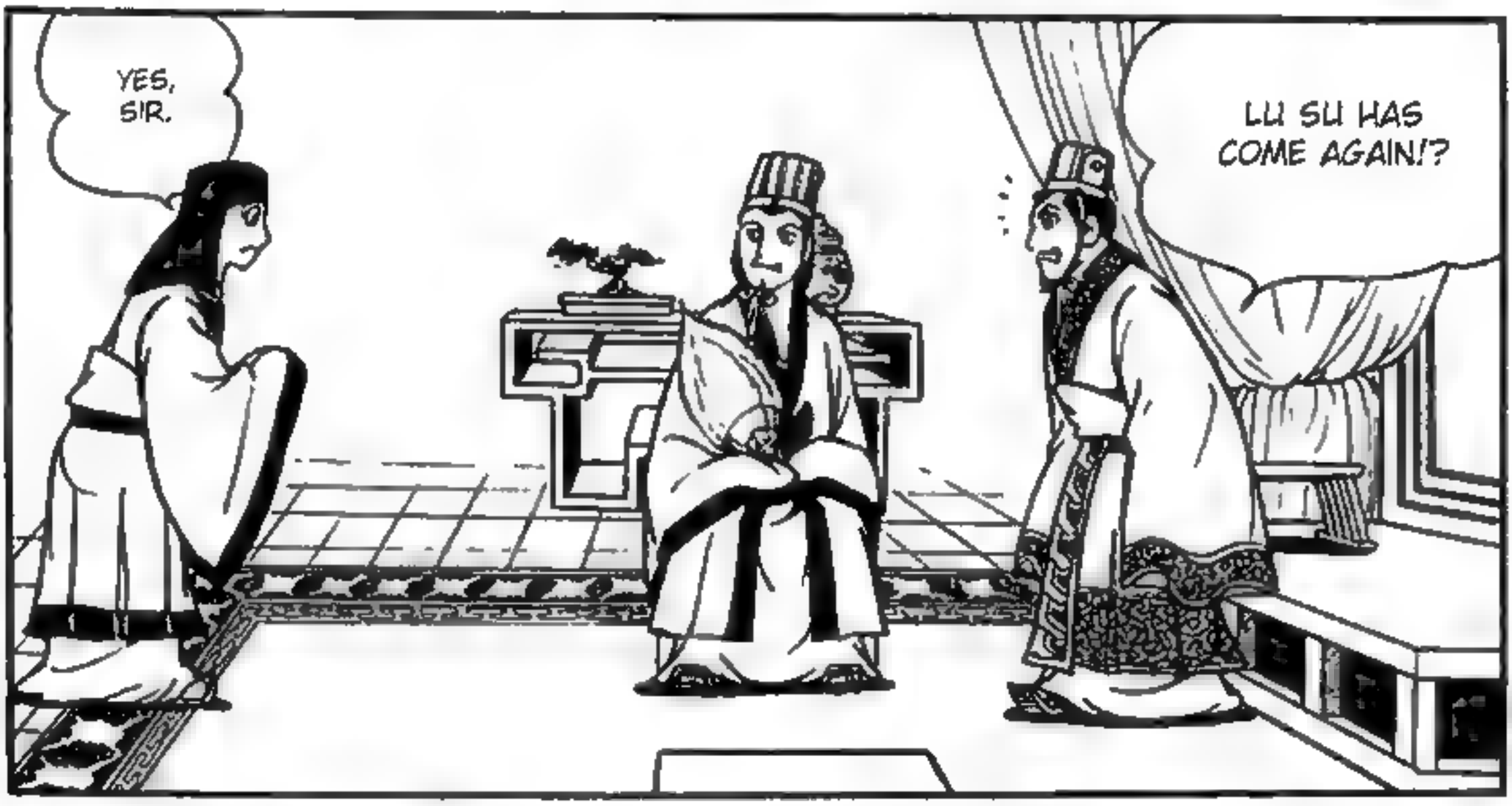
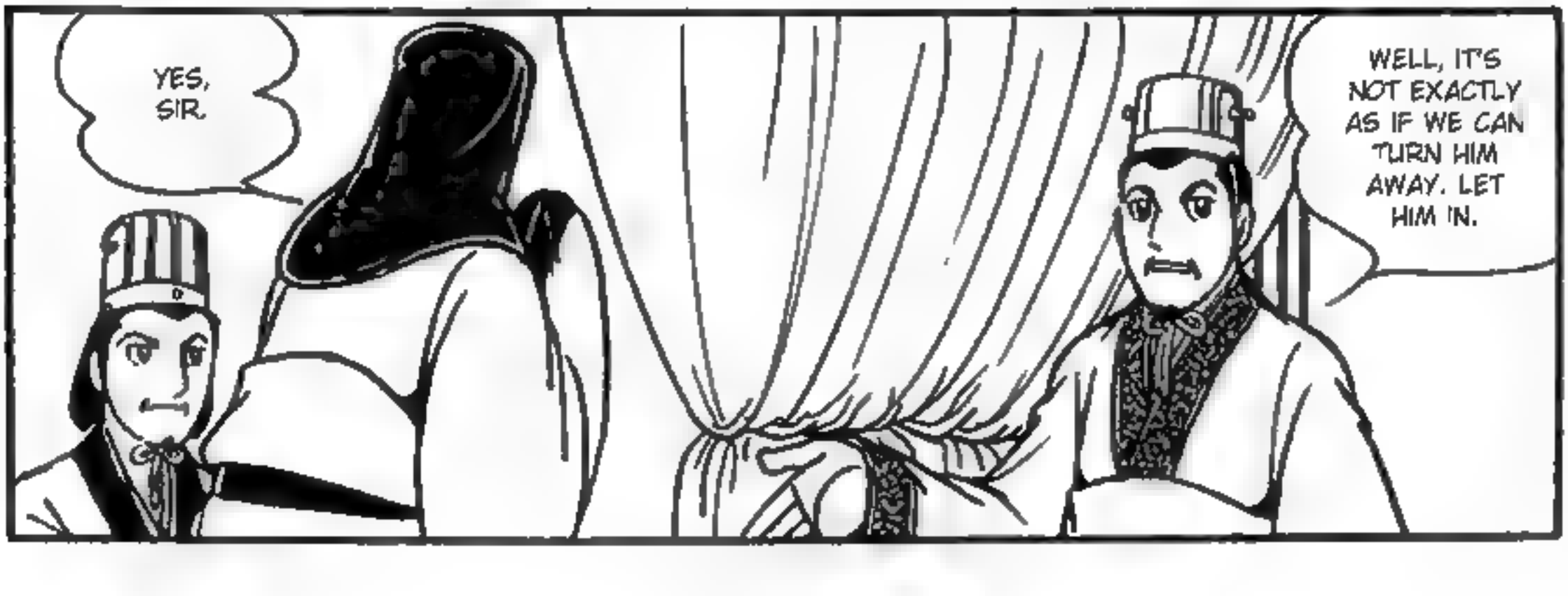
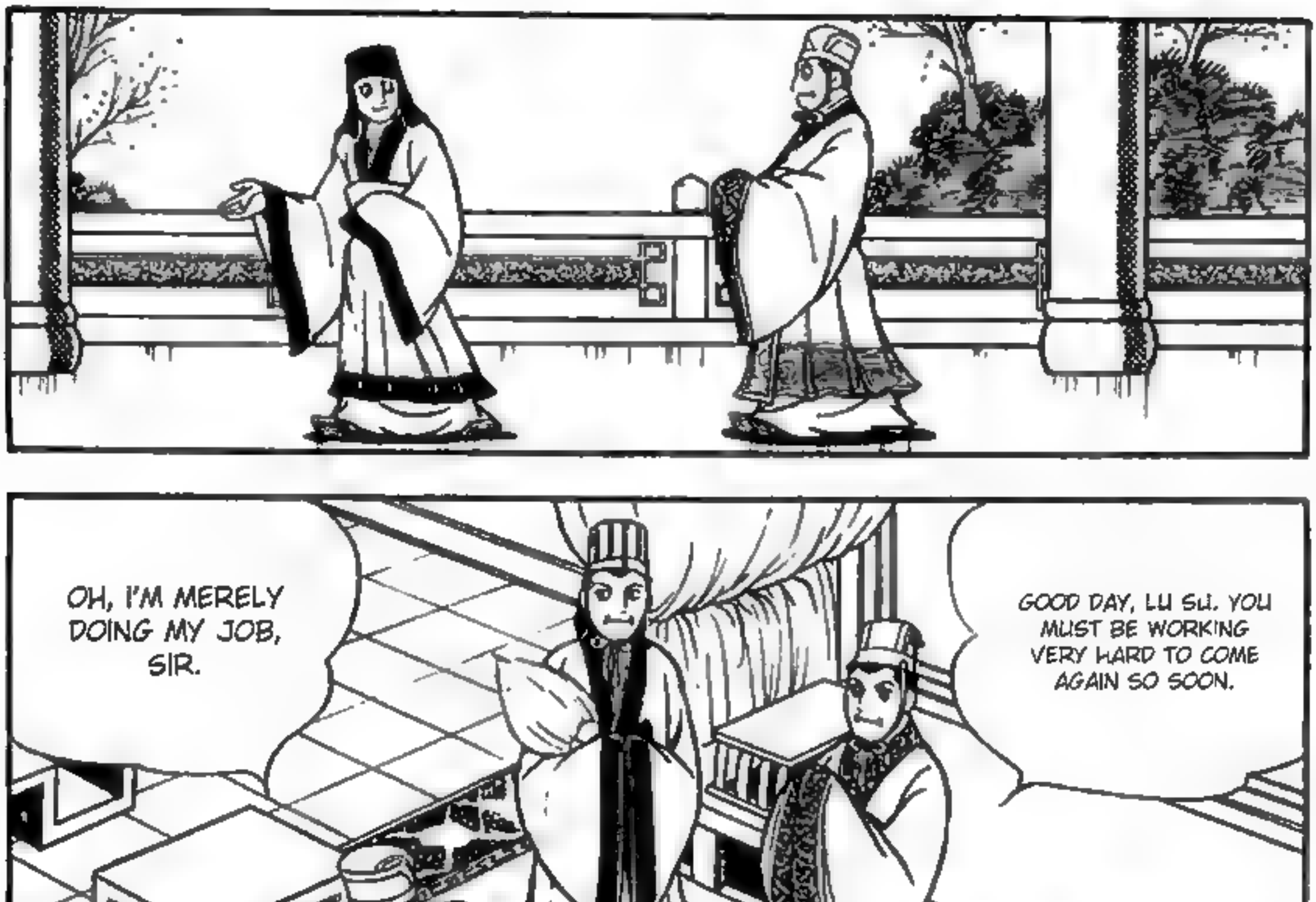
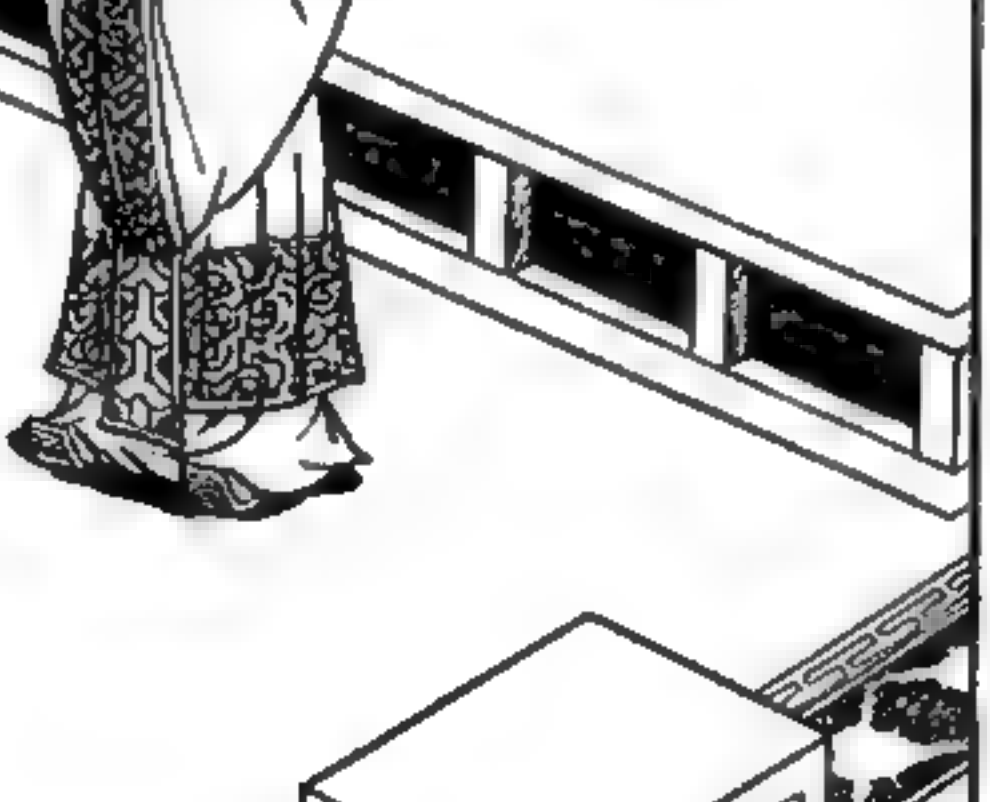

YES, SIR.
LU SU HAS COME AGAIN!?


YES, SIR.
WELL, IT'S NOT EXACTLY AS IF WE CAN TURN HIM AWAY. LET HIM IN.


OH, I'M MERELY DOING MY JOB, SIR.
GOOD DAY, LU SU. YOU MUST BE WORKING VERY HARD TO COME AGAIN SO SOON.

WELL, MY LORD GREATLY SYMPA-THIZED WITH YOUR MOST UNFORTUNATE PREDICAMENT.


WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE THIS TIME?

OH? AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

AND SO, HE SENT ME BACK HERE QUICKLY TO GIVE AN OFFER THAT YOU'LL BE MOST DELIGHTED TO HEAR.

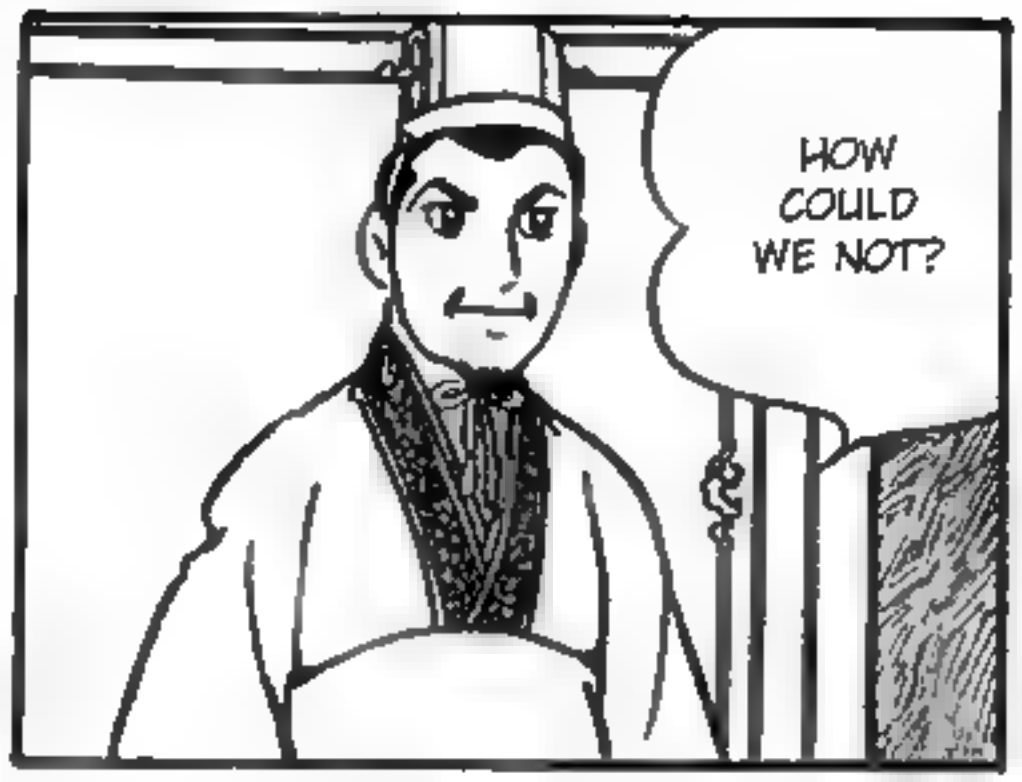
ALL HE ASKS FOR IN RETURN IS TO LET HIS ARMIES PASS THROUGH JINGZHOU AS WELL AS PROVIDE SOME SUPPLIES.

SINCE YOU CANNOT ATTACK SHU YOURSELF OUT OF MORAL OBLIGATIONS, MY LORD SAYS HIS TROOPS WILL INSTEAD CONQUER SHU AND THEN GIVE IT YOU.

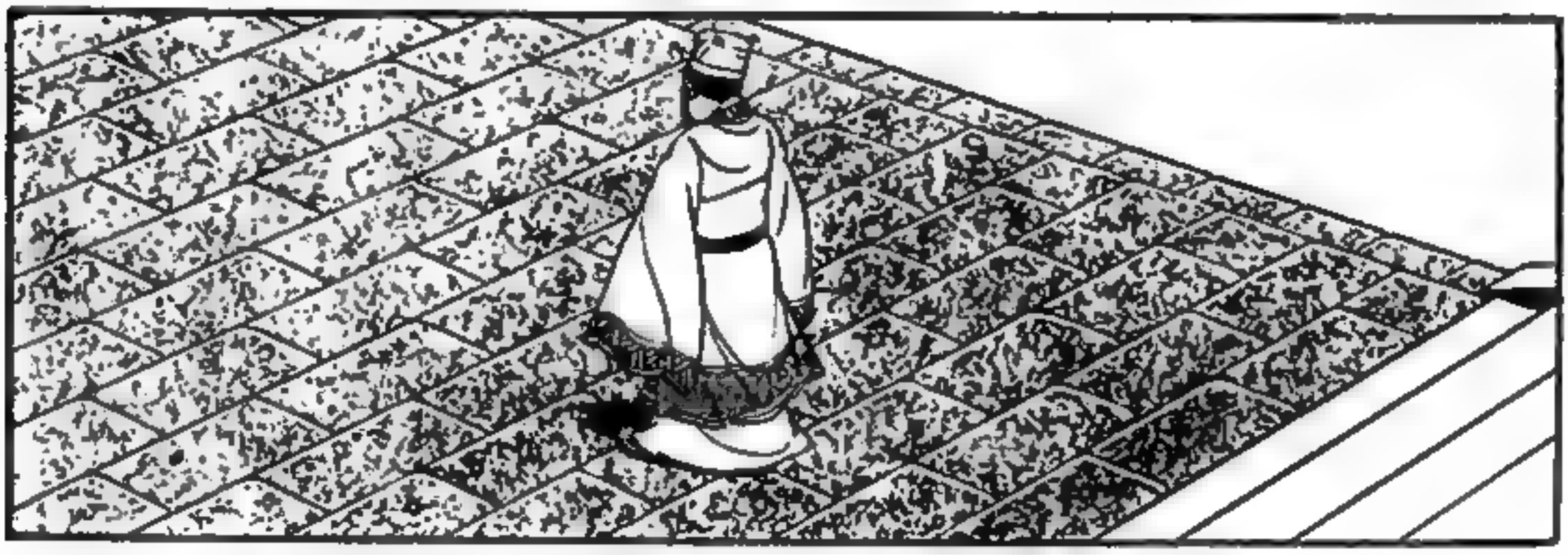
SO YOU'LL ACCEPT?

AN EXCELLENT OFFER! MY LORD AND I COULD NOT BE MORE PLEASED.

THEN THAT'S A RELIEF FOR I SHALL HAVE FINALLY CARRIED OUT MY MISSION.


HOW COULD WE NOT?

THANK YOU, LU SU. NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE IF NOT FOR YOUR DILLIGENCE.
I MUST NOW QUICKLY RETURN TO DELIVER MY LORD THIS JOYOUS NEWS.



WHAT?

THIS IS NOT SUN QUAN'S IDEA.

NOW THEN... WHAT DO YOU THINK SUN QUAN IS PLOTTING THIS TIME WITH THIS PROPOSAL...?

IT IS ZHOU YU'S PLOT.

LU SU DID NOT GO ALL THE WAY BACK TO NANXU TO MEET WITH SUN QUAN. INSTEAD, HE MUST HAVE DROPPED BY CHAISANG TO CONSULT WITH ZHOU YU, WHO THEN TOLD HIM TO COME BACK HERE TO SET HIS PLAN IN MOTION.

HIS REAL INTENTION IS NOT TO PASS THROUGH JINGZHOU AND ATTACK SHU, BUT INSTEAD ATTACK JINGZHOU ITSELF.

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, HIS SUPPOSED TRIP FROM NANXU AND BACK SEEMS FAR TOO QUICK.

DESPITE MY WARNINGS, IT SEEMS HE IS SET UPON RUSHING TO HIS DEATH...

IT IS TIME FOR US TO SETTLE THINGS WITH ZHOU YU ONCE AND FOR ALL.

IF YOU KNEW ALL THAT, THEN WHY DID YOU HAVE ME ACCEPT HIS OFFER?

YES, SIR.

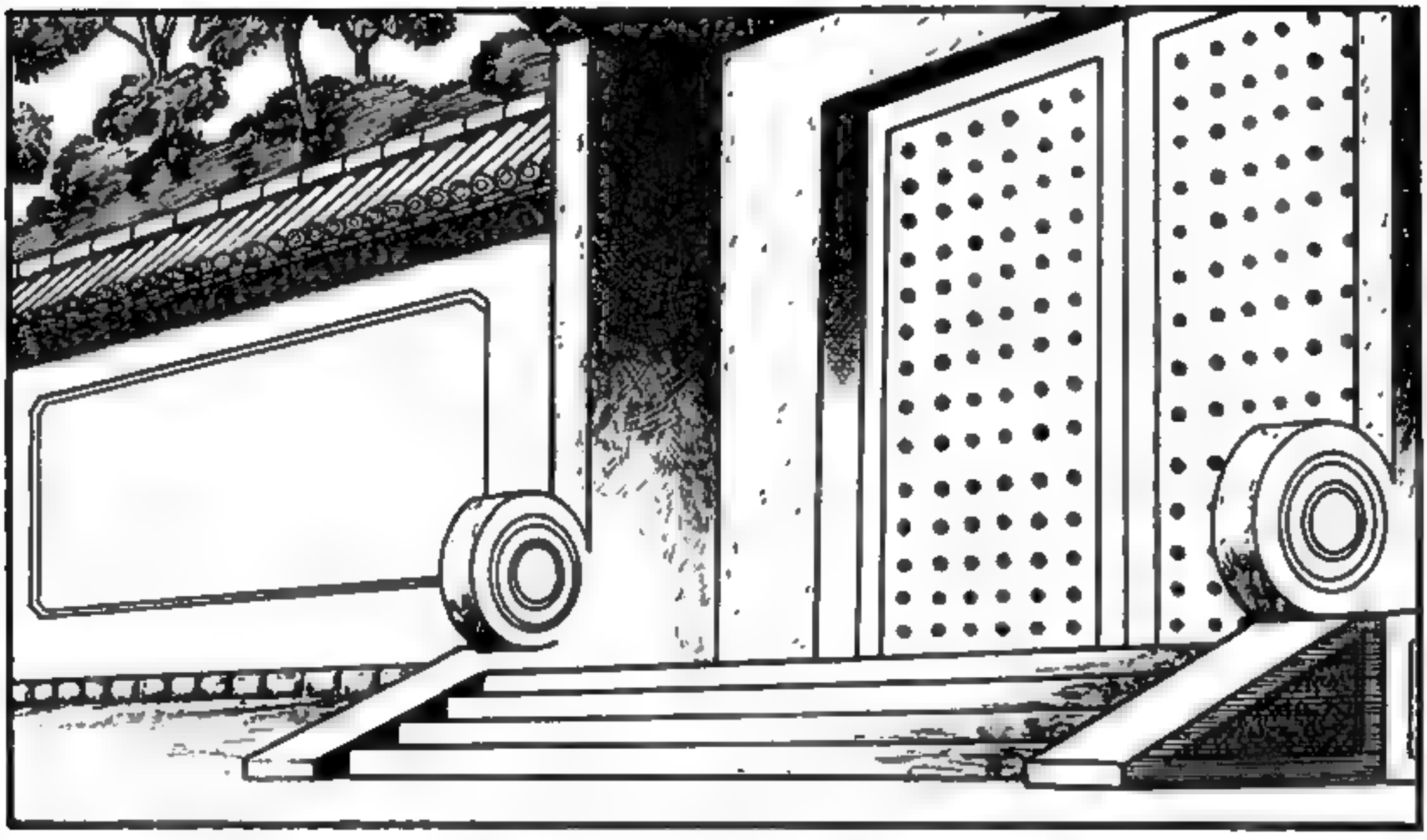
CALL GENERAL ZHAO ZILONG HERE.

YES, COME CLOSER.

YOU CALLED, SIR?

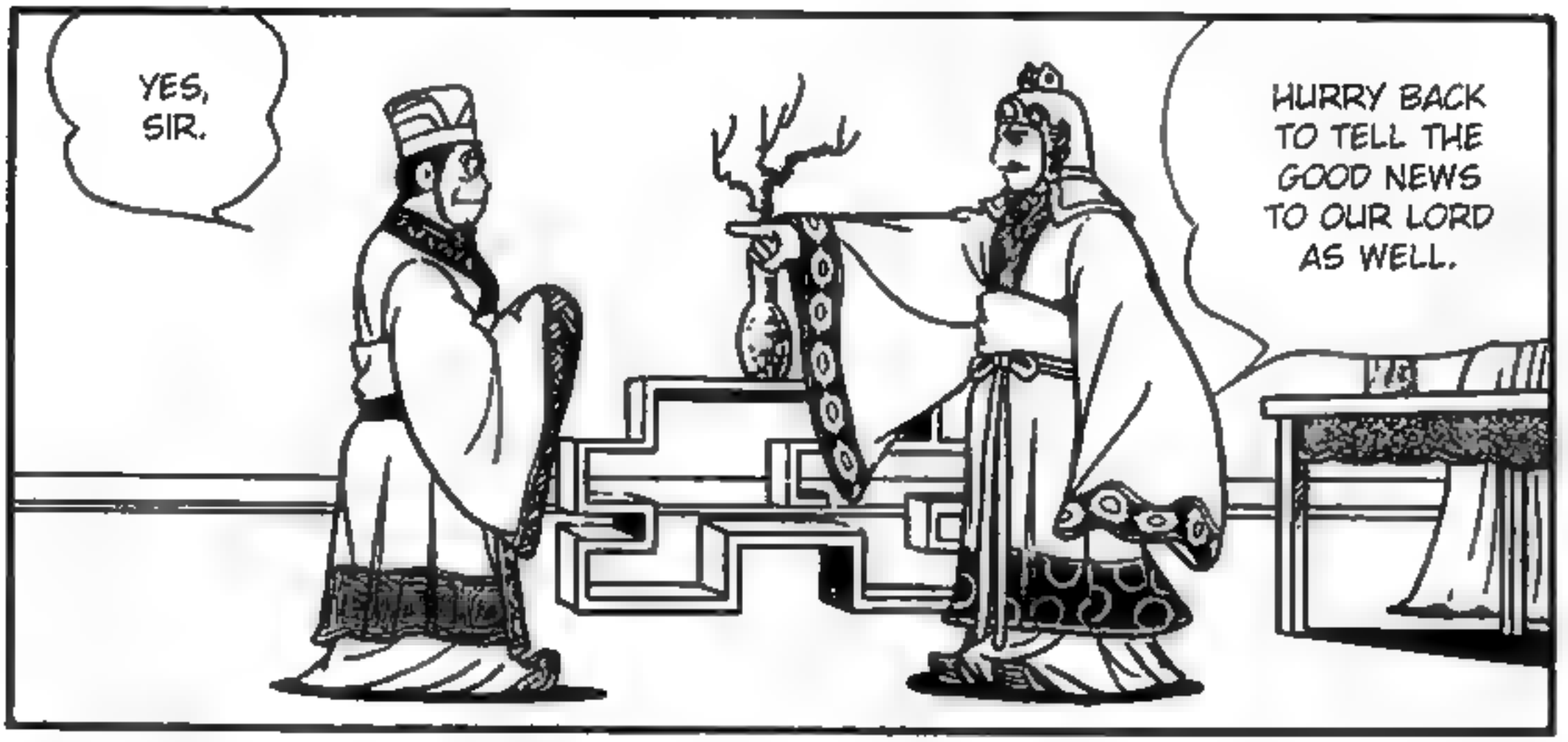
UNDERSTOOD.

ZHOU YU'S END



AT LAST, I MANAGED TO TRICK EVEN THE WILY KONGMING!

KONGMING AGREED TO LET US PASS!?


YES, SIR.
HURRY BACK TO TELL THE GOOD NEWS TO OUR LORD AS WELL.

YES, MY LORD.

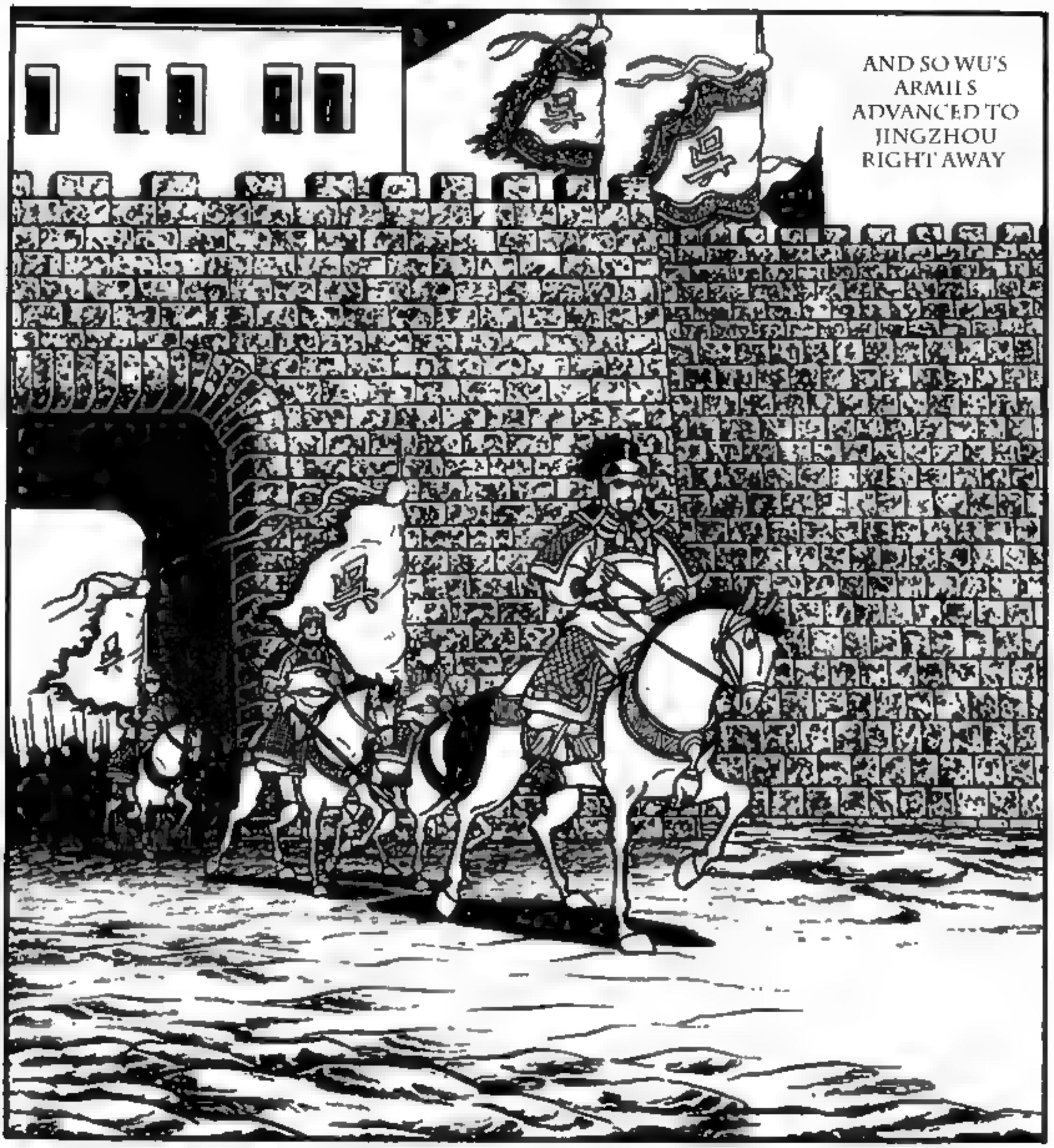
SO OUR ARMIES WILL CAPTURE JINGZHOU ONCE THEY PASS THROUGH ITS GATES?

AT LAST, LIU BEI AND KONGMING WILL MEET THEIR ENDS.

WELL DONE ZHOU YU. TRULY YOU ARE THE PRIDE OF WU AND EQUALLED BY NONE.

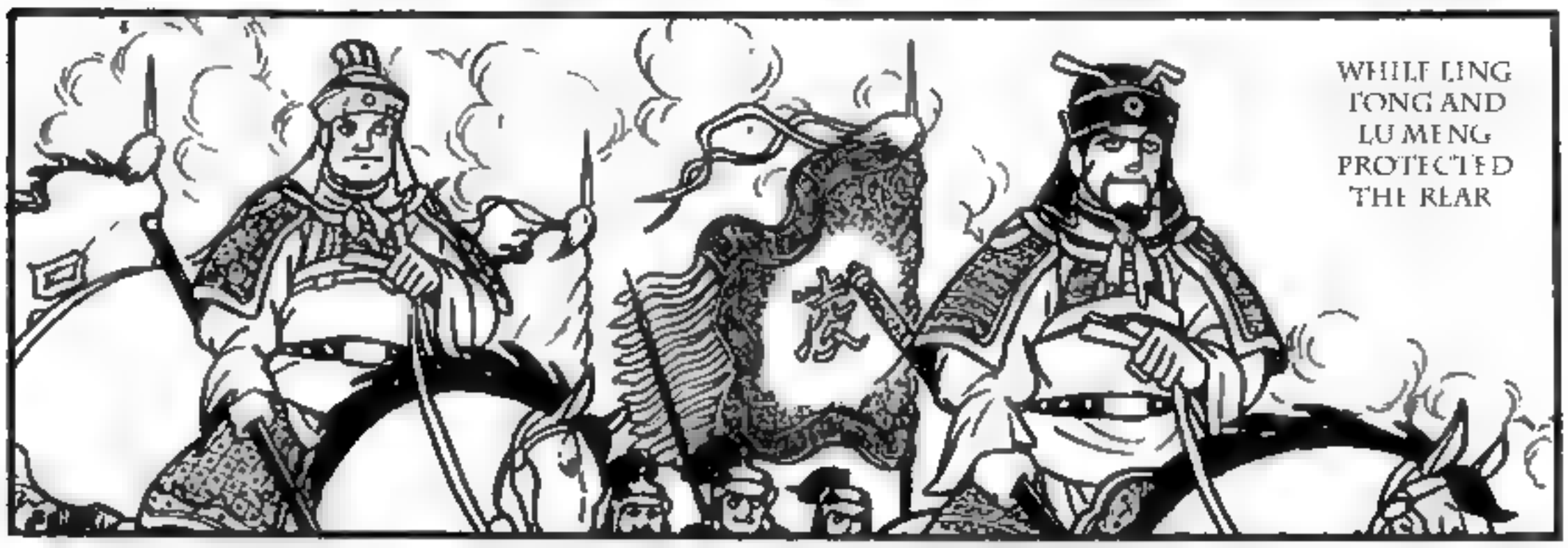
YES, SIR!

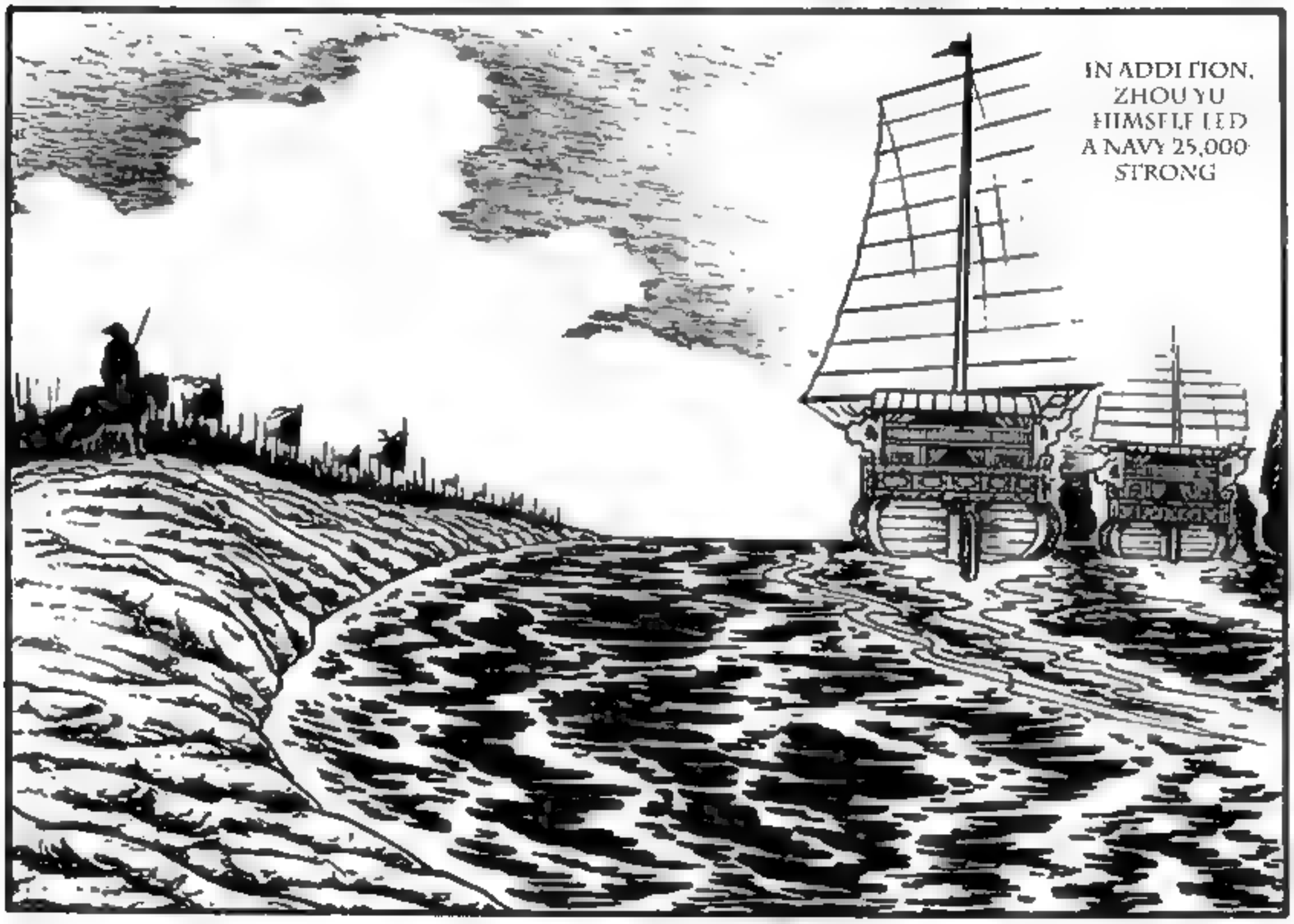
MOBILIZE THE TROOPS RIGHT AWAY!

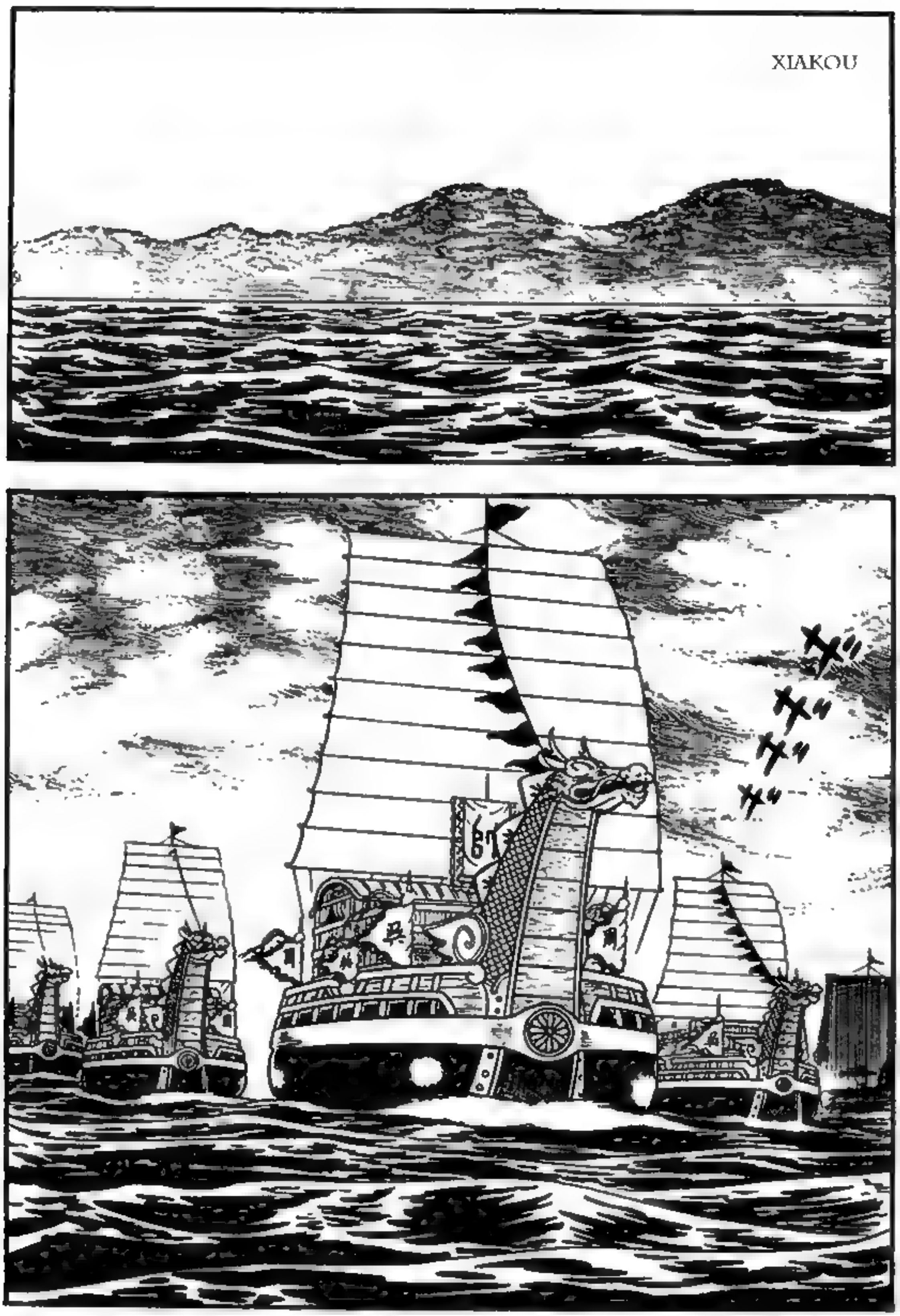

AND SO WU'S ARMIES ADVANCED TO JINGZHOU RIGHT AWAY

GAN NING LED THE VANGUARD.

XU SHENG AND DING FENG LED THE MIDDLE.
徐


WHILE LING TONG AND LU MENG PROTECTED THE REAR


IN ADDITION, ZHOU YU HIMSELF LED A NAVY 25,000 STRONG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HM?

THERE'S A SMALL BOAT COMING TOWARDS US, COMMANDER.

BRING THE LADDER!

I AM MI ZHU AND I'VE BEEN SENT HERE BY MY LORD LIU BEI TO GREET YOU.

IS THAT SO?
FIRST, WE'D LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR COMING ALL THIS WAY FOR OUR SAKE. AS YOU'VE REQUESTED, MY LORD HAS PREPARED GRAINS, HAY, ARROWS, AND OTHER SUPPLIES FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN.

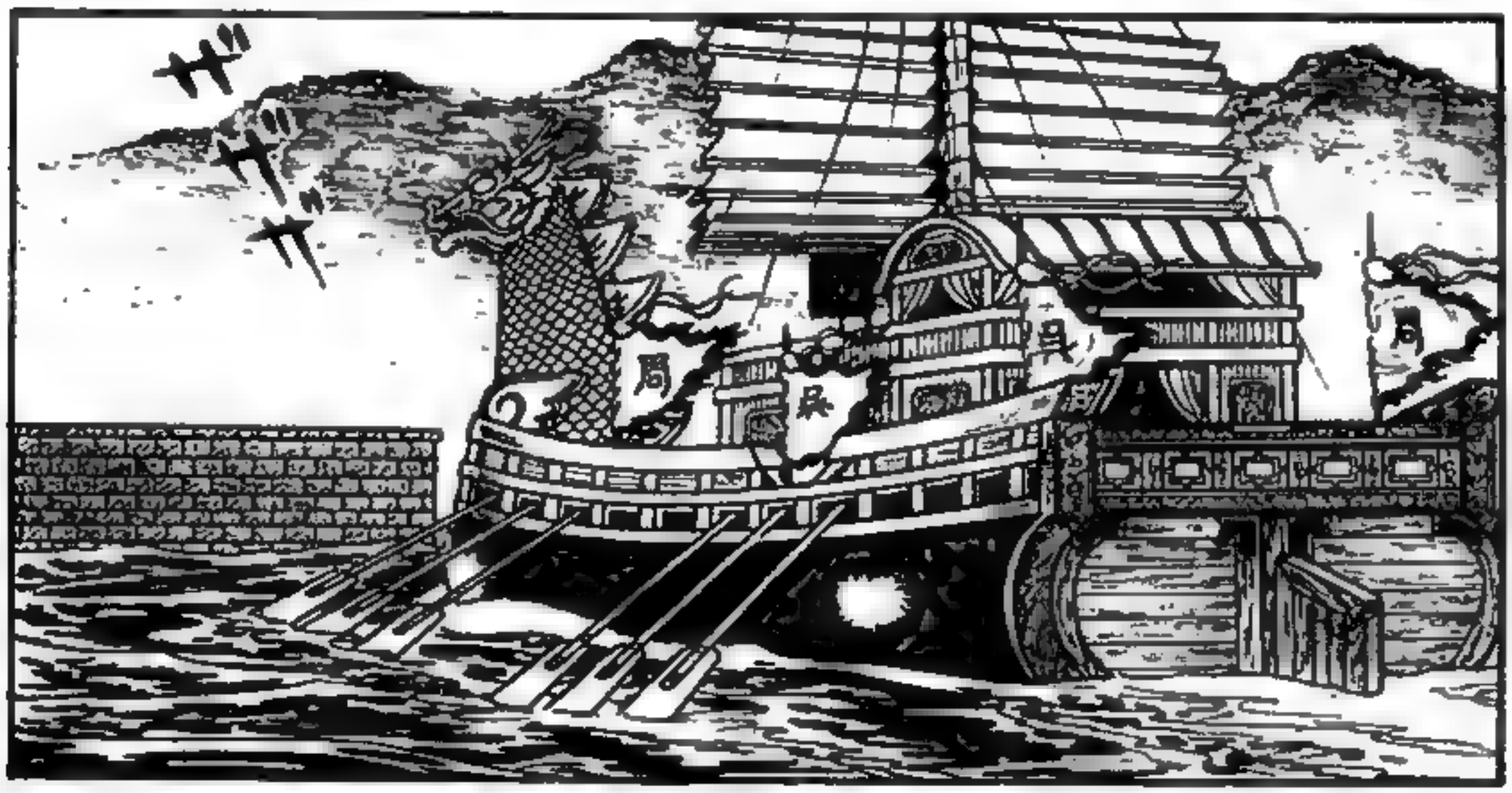
JUST OUTSIDE OF JINGZHOU'S GATES. HE IS EAGERLY AWAITING YOUR ARRIVAL, SIR.

AND WHERE IS LIU BEI RIGHT NOW?

OF COURSE, COMMANDER ZHOU.

GOOD, GOOD. KEEP IN MIND THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS CAMPAIGN IS TO TAKE SHU FOR YOUR LORD SO REMIND HIM TO SPARE NO EXPENSE IN SUPPORTING MY TROOPS.

BRING THE SHIPS ASHORE!
HAHA...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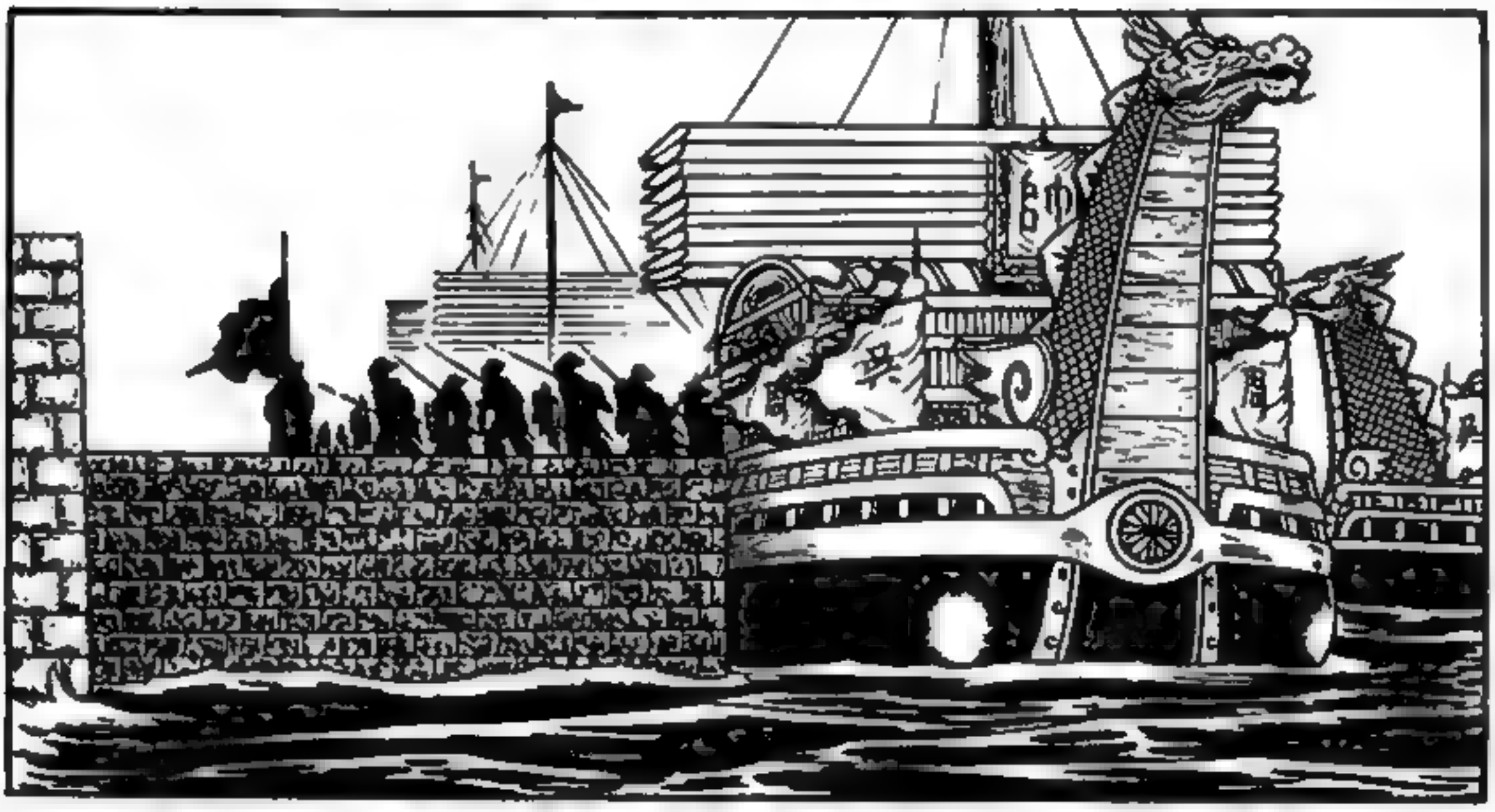

LET US RESUME OUR MARCH!
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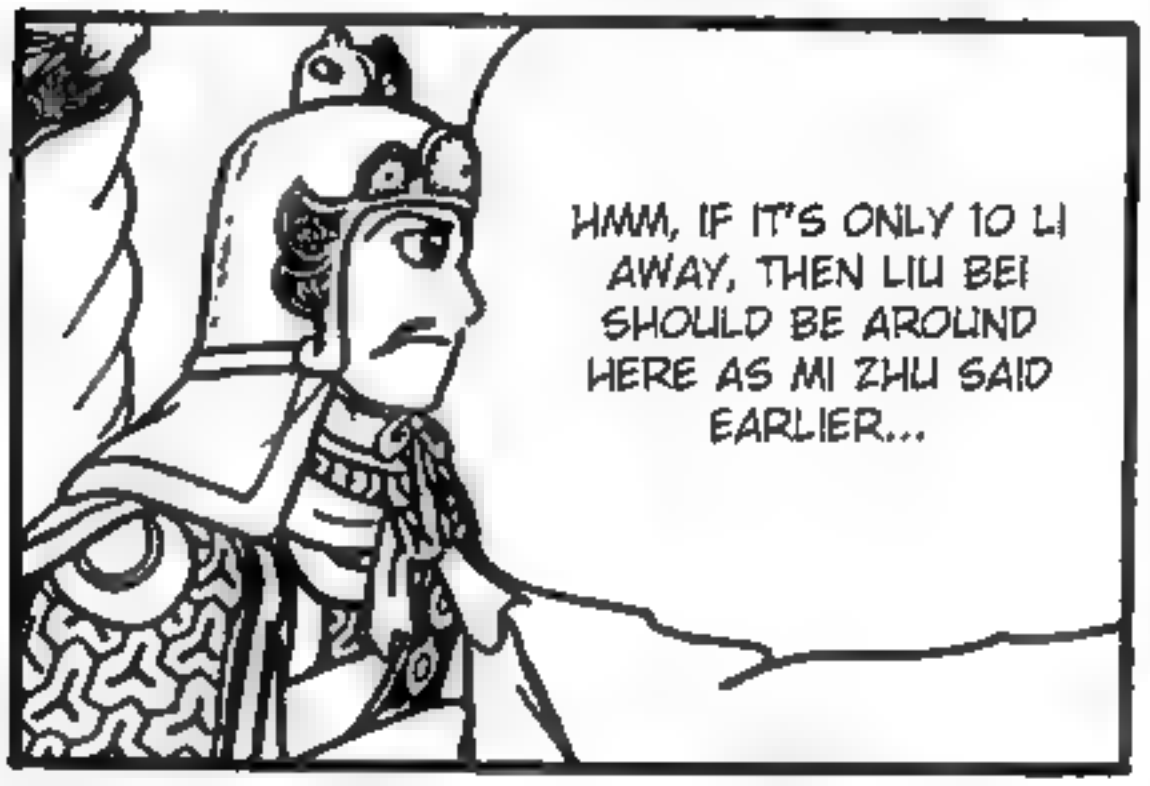
EXACTLY HOW FAR IS IT FROM HERE TO JINGZHOU?

THAT'S ODD... SHOULDN'T THEY HAVE COME AT LEAST THIS FAR OUT TO ESCORT US?


HMM, IF IT'S ONLY 10 LI AWAY, THEN LIU BEI SHOULD BE AROUND HERE AS MI ZHU SAID EARLIER...

ONLY 10 LI, COMMANDER.

GOOD.

吳

SIR, OUR SCOUTS HAVE JUST RETURNED.

FROM OUTSIDE, JINGZHOU APPEARS TO BE EMPTY WITH THE ONLY THING VISIBLE BEING A FEW WHITE FLAGS.

HERE TO REPORT, COMMANDER!

GAN NING! DING FENG!

HM...

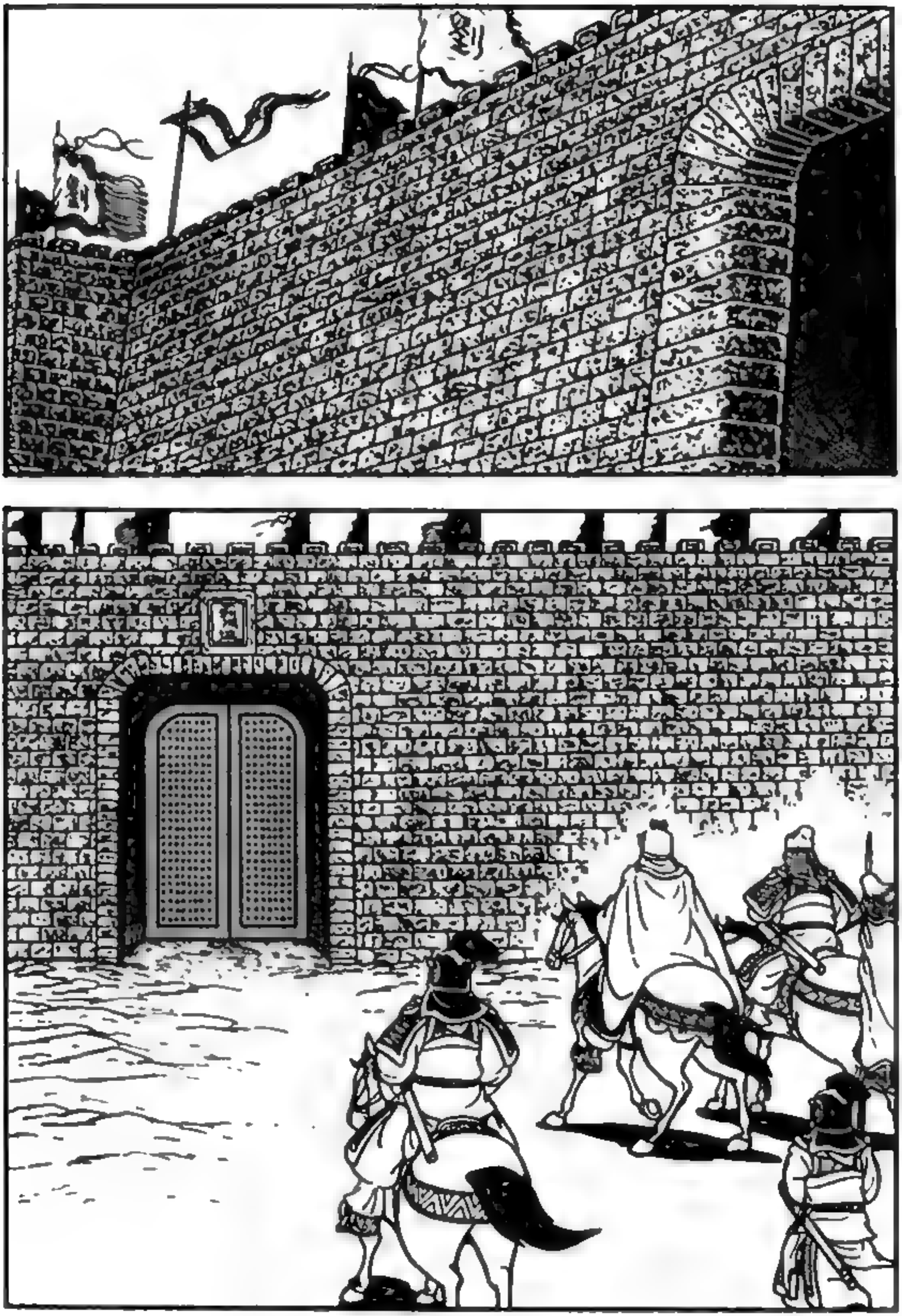
SOMETHING SEEMS RATHER SUSPICIOUS. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE THAT KONGMING REALIZED OUR PLAN AT THE LAST MOMENT AND QUICKLY HAD THEIR FORCES RETREAT FROM THE CITY.

YES?

YES?

YES, SIR.

THE THREE OF US WITH 3000 SOLDIERS SHALL GO FIRST TO ASCERTAIN THE SITUATION.



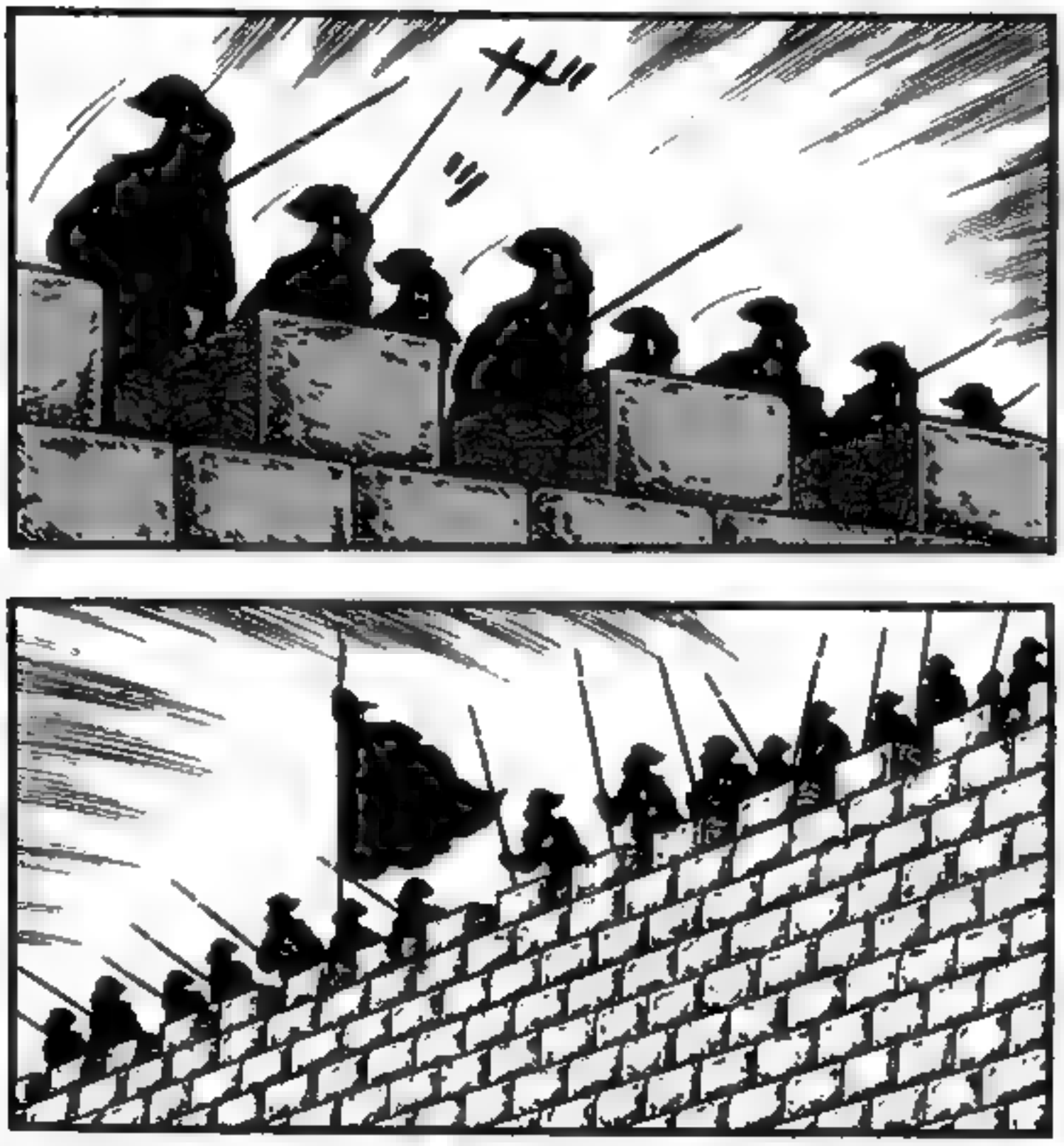
YES, SIR.

GO TELL THEM TO OPEN IT.

YES...

THE GATES ARE SHUT TIGHT.

THE COMMANDER OF WU'S FORCES, ZHOU YU, HAS ARRIVED! I ASK YOU TO OPEN YOUR GATES!



ZHAO YUN!?

ZHOU YU!? WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?

HAHA, DO YOU REALLY THINK OUR RENOWNED STRATEGIST IS UNAWARE OF YOUR TRUE INTENTIONS?

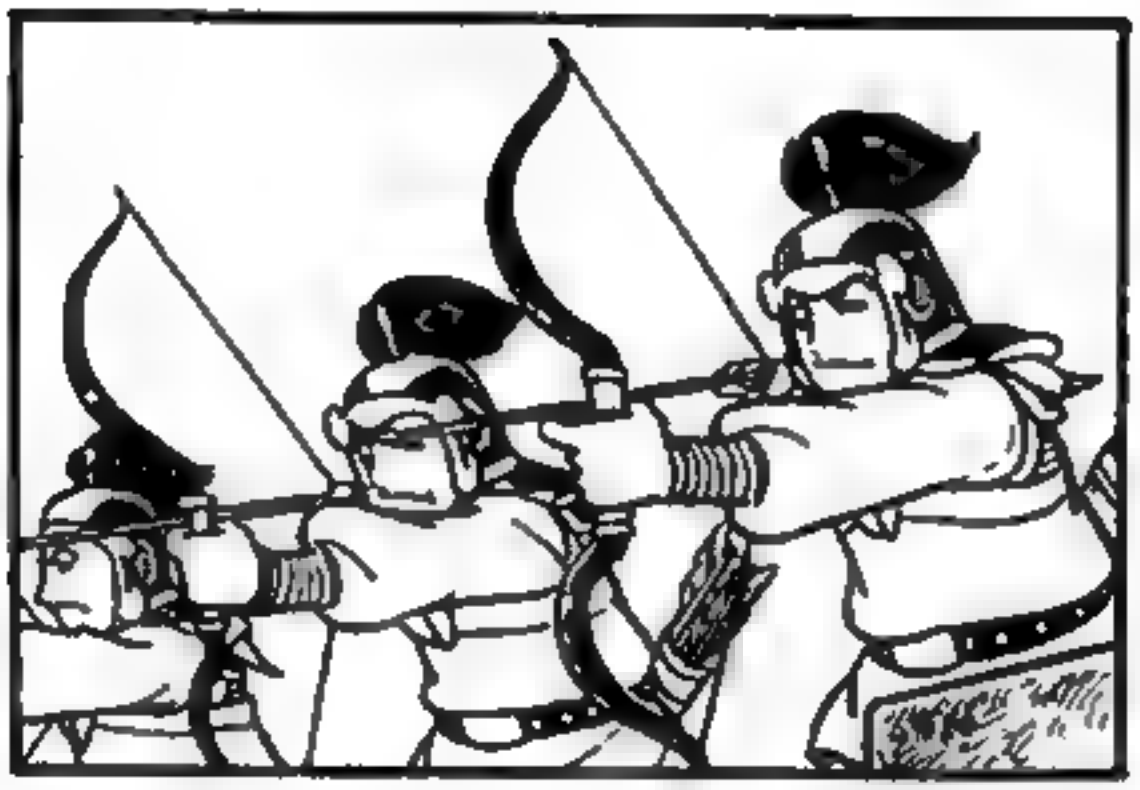
YOU SHOULD WATCH THAT TONGUE OF YOURS. WE'VE COME HERE TO CONQUER SHU FOR YOUR LORD SO IT IS IN YOUR BEST INTERESTS TO TREAT US WELL.

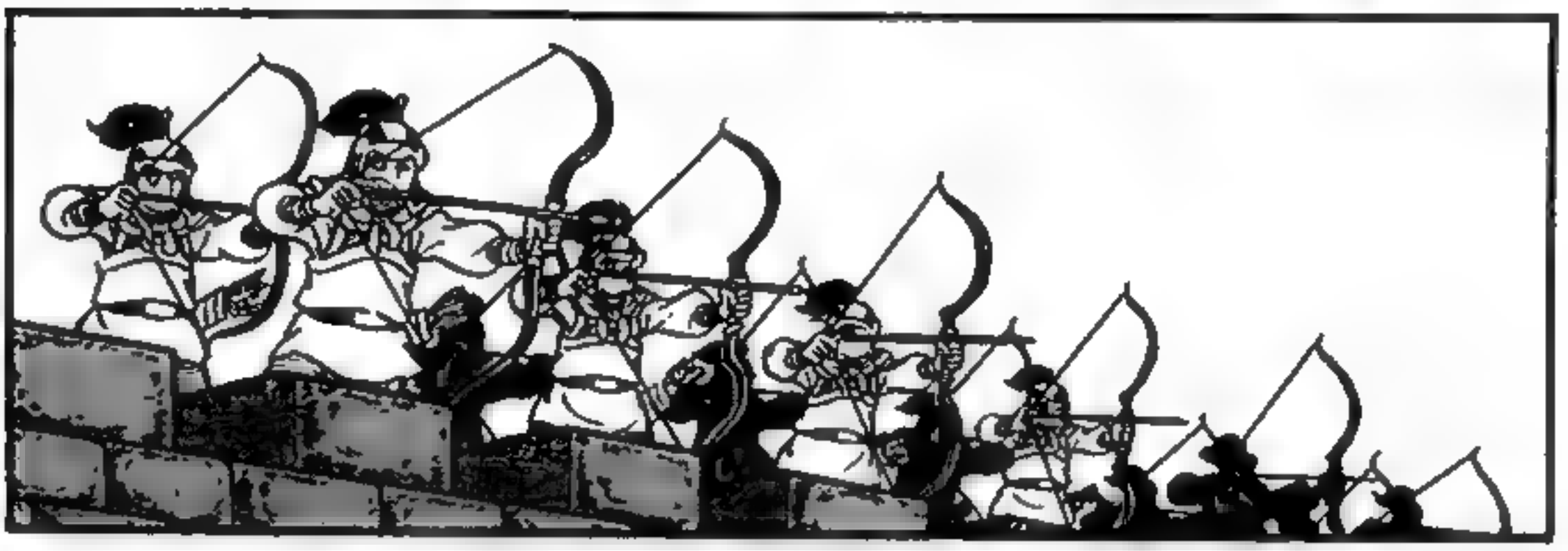
KONGMING HAS SEEN THROUGH YOUR "BORROW-A-ROAD-TO-DESTROY-THE-HOST" PLAN AND HAS ORDERED ME TO GUARD JINGZHOU.

WHAT!?

IF YOU'RE STILL TOO STUBBORN TO RETREAT, THEN FEEL FREE TO CHALLENGE ME.

AHHH!





RETREAT!
RETREAT!

SIR!

HM?

WHAT!?

LIU BEI'S FORCES HAVE BEEN SPOTTED ADVANCING TOWARDS OUR ARMY FROM ALL DIRECTIONS!

GUAN YU IS MARCHING FROM JIANGLING, ZHANG FEI FROM ZIGUI, HUANG ZHONG FROM GONGAN, AND WEI YAN FROM CHANLING!

I'VE BEEN HAD BY KONGMING AGAIN!

W-WE'RE BEING SUR-ROUNDED!?

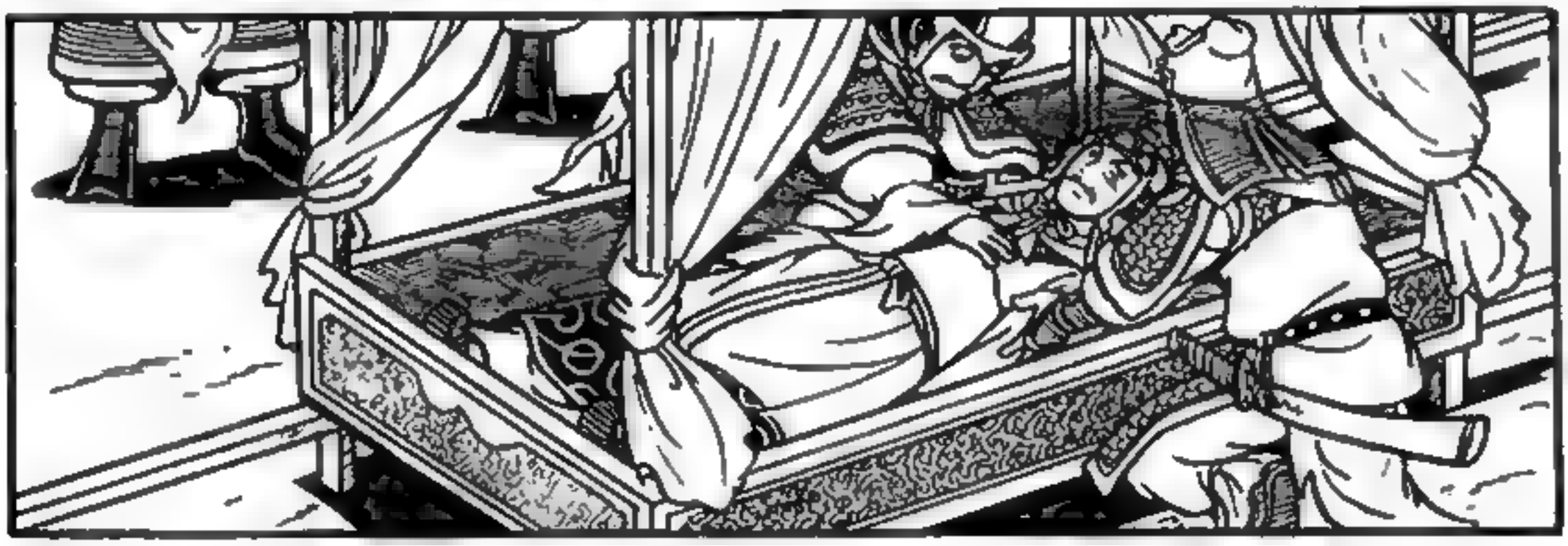
URP!

GAHH!

SIR!

AHH!

BRING
THE
LITTER!



IT'S SUN YU!

HM?

SUN YU (SUN QUAN'S YOUNGER COUSIN)

I'M AFRAID COMMANDER ZHOU HAS COLLAPSED FROM HIS OLD WOUNDS ACTING UP AGAIN.

WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE MATTER?

S-SUN YU...!

NGHH...

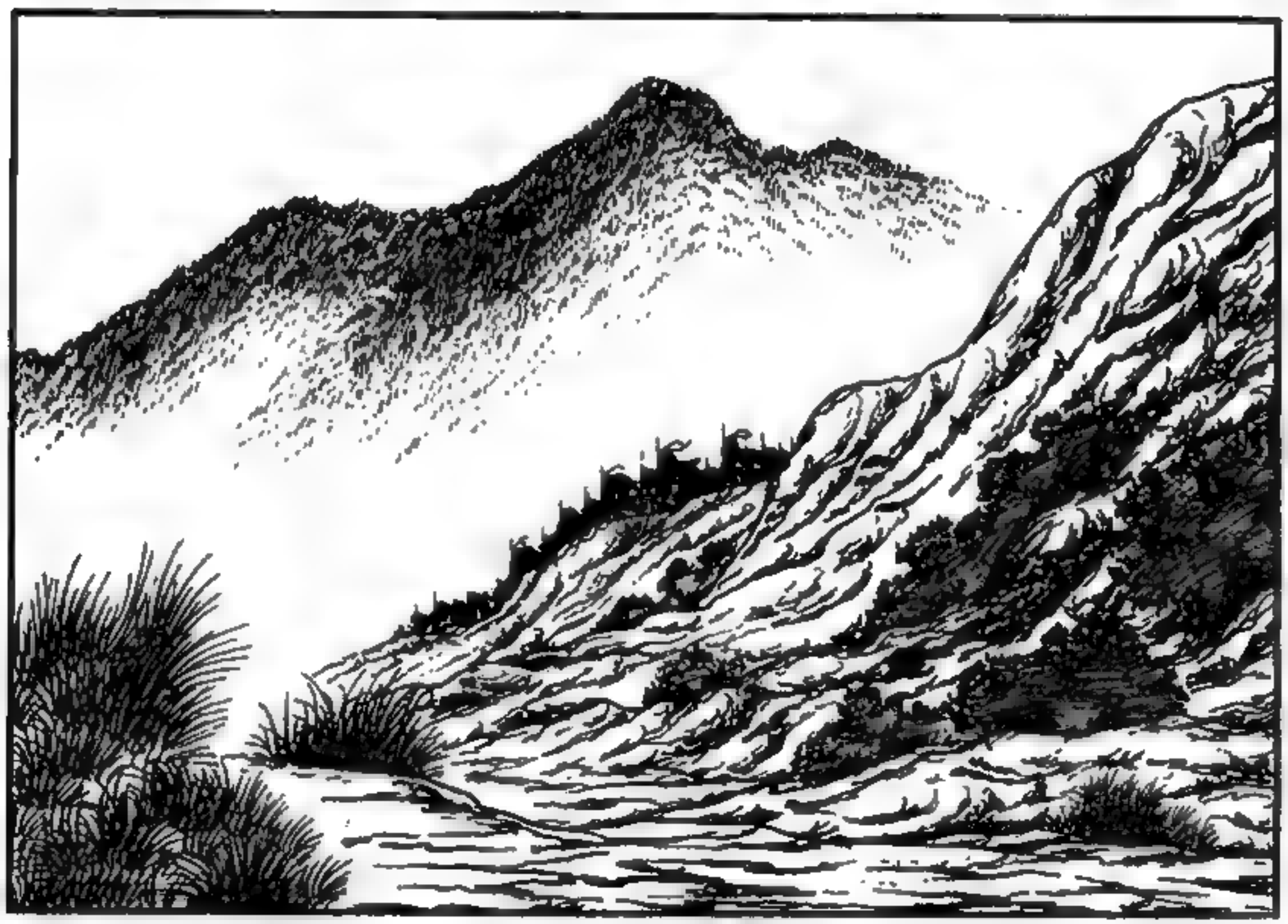
BUT I CAN'T JUST WITHDRAW AFTER MOBILIZING SO MANY TROOPS AND PROMISING MY LORD... WE MUST TAKE JINGZHOU NO MATTER WHAT...

AS EMBARRASSING AS IT IS TO ADMIT, KONGMING FOUND OUT ABOUT MY PLOT AGAIN...

RIGHT AWAY.
TAKE ZHOU YU BACK TO THE BOAT.
孫

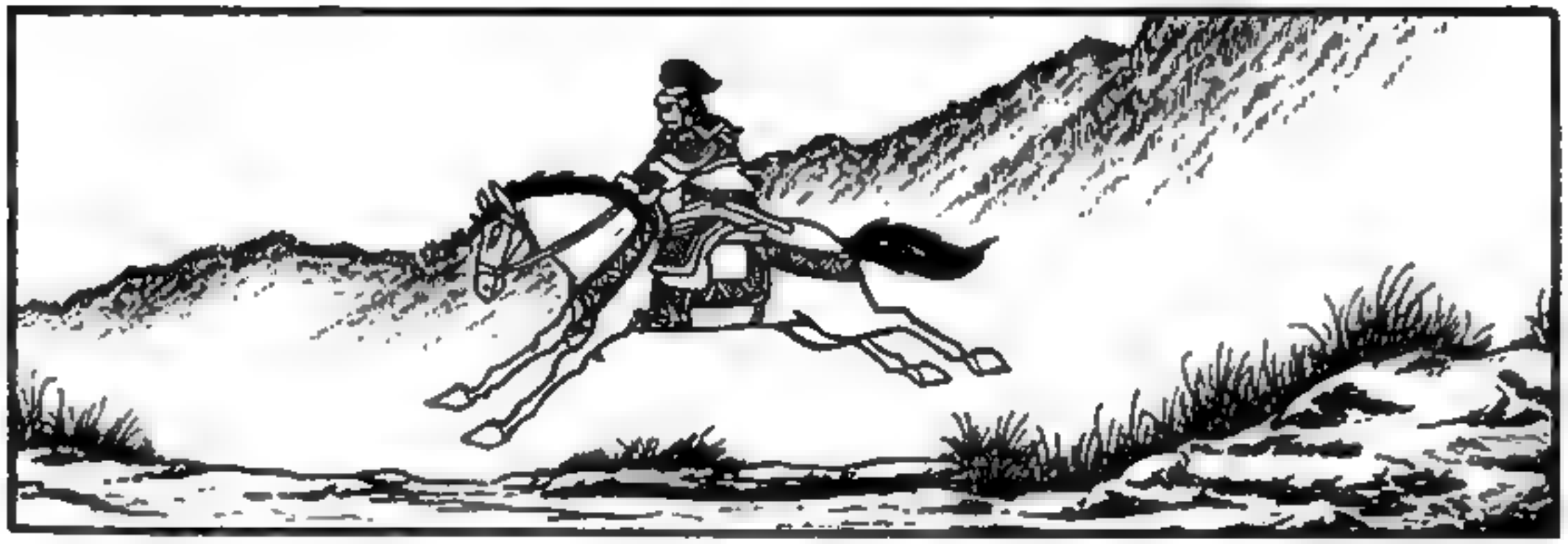
REST EASY FOR NOW, ZHOU YU. ALLOW ME TO TAKE OVER THE COMMAND WHILE YOU RECOVER.

HM?



YES, SIR.
GO SCOUT AHEAD AND FIND OUT.

ARE THOSE ENEMIES OR OUR OWN TROOPS?



OUR SCOUTS ARE CHECKING TO SEE IF THE TROOPS AHEAD OF US ARE ENEMIES OR NOT.

WHAT'S THE MATTER?

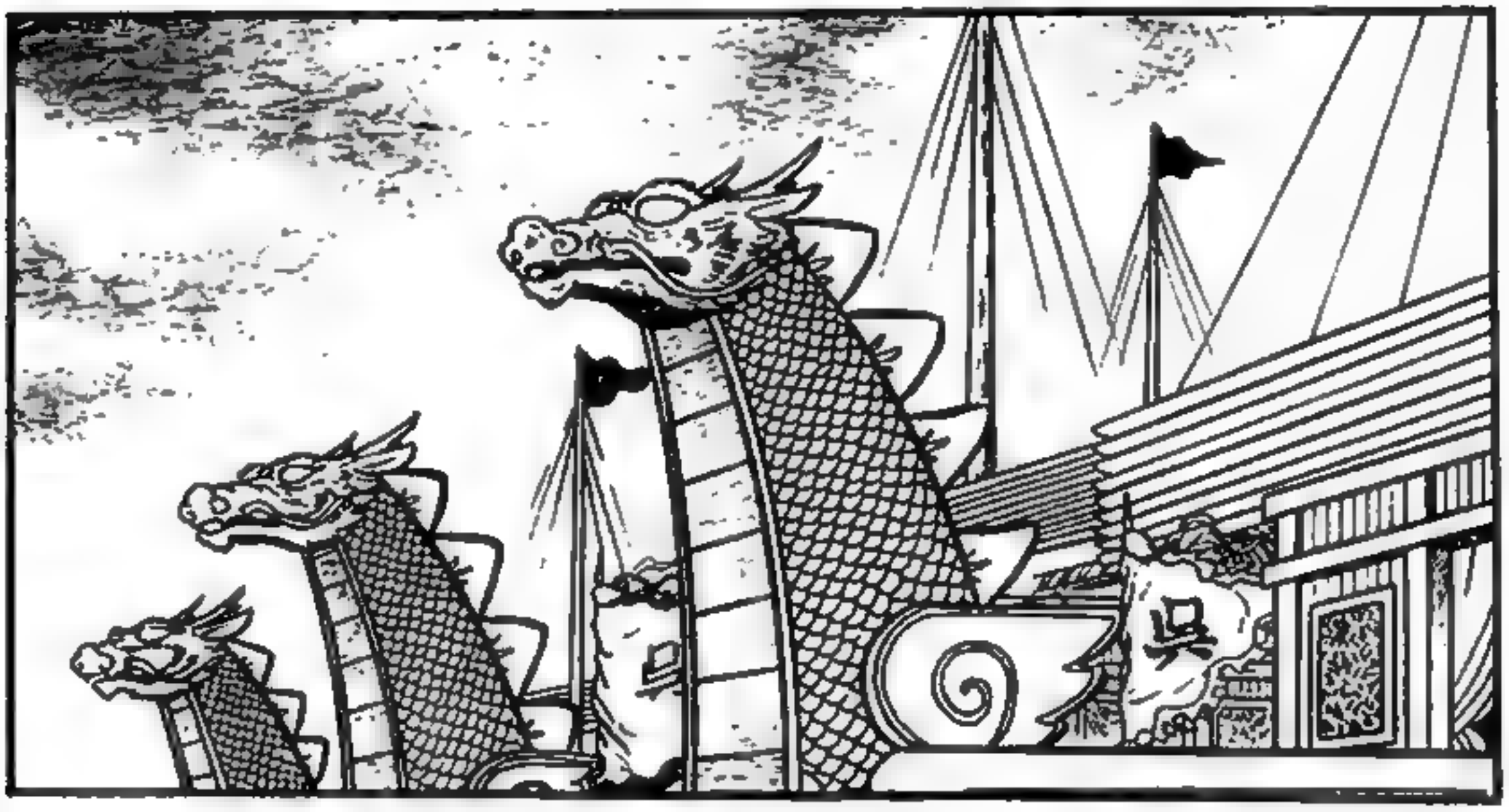
WHAT!?
SIR! THE TROOPS AHEAD ARE LIU BEI'S FORCES LED BY GUAN PING AND LIU FENG!

URP!

THOSE PESKY LITTLE UPSTARTS! WE'LL BREAK THROUGH THEIR LINES!

WE'LL FIND ANOTHER PATH!

YOU MUST CALM DOWN, COMMANDER.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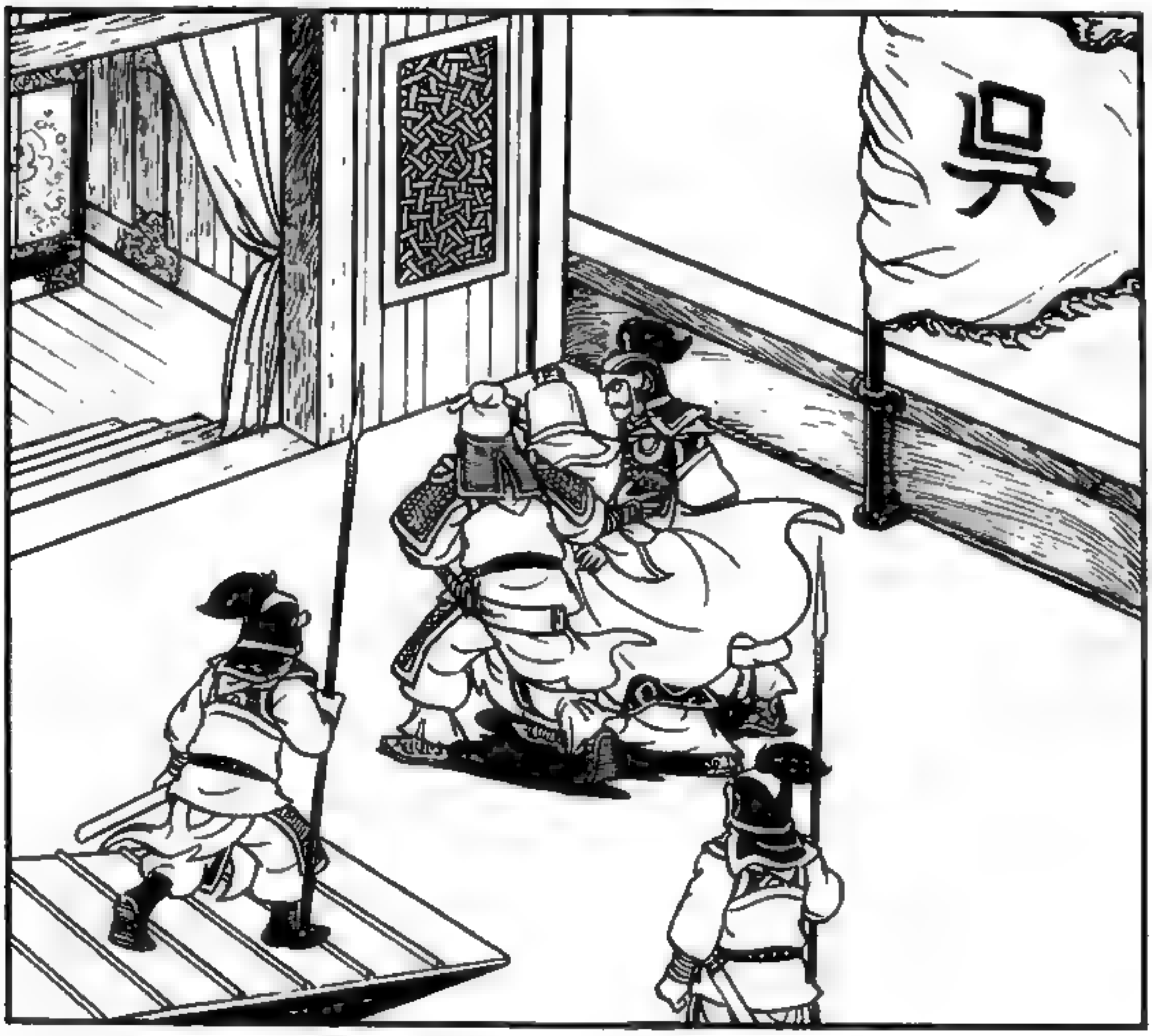
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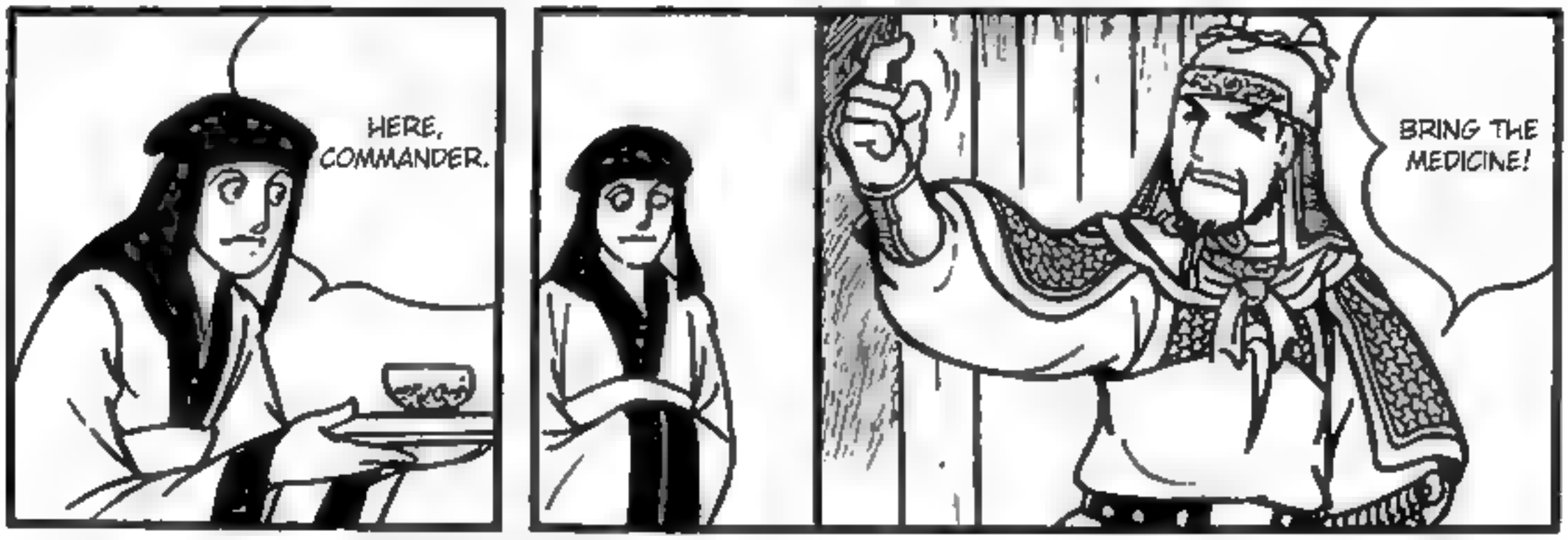
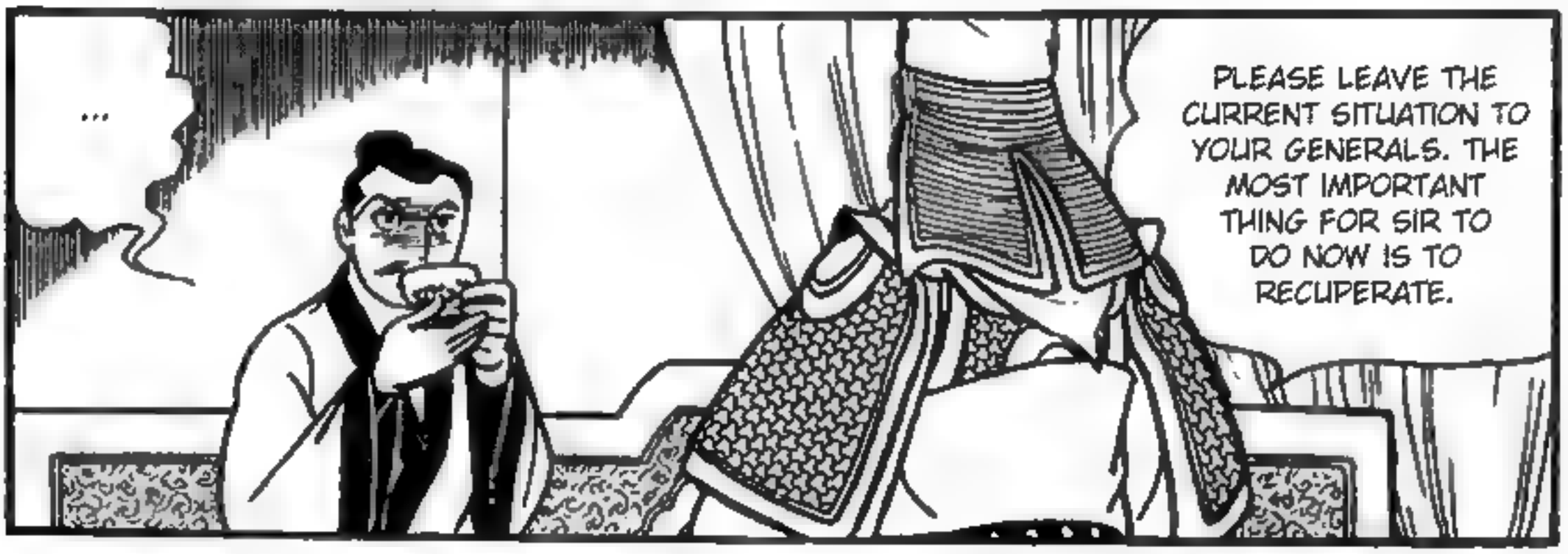
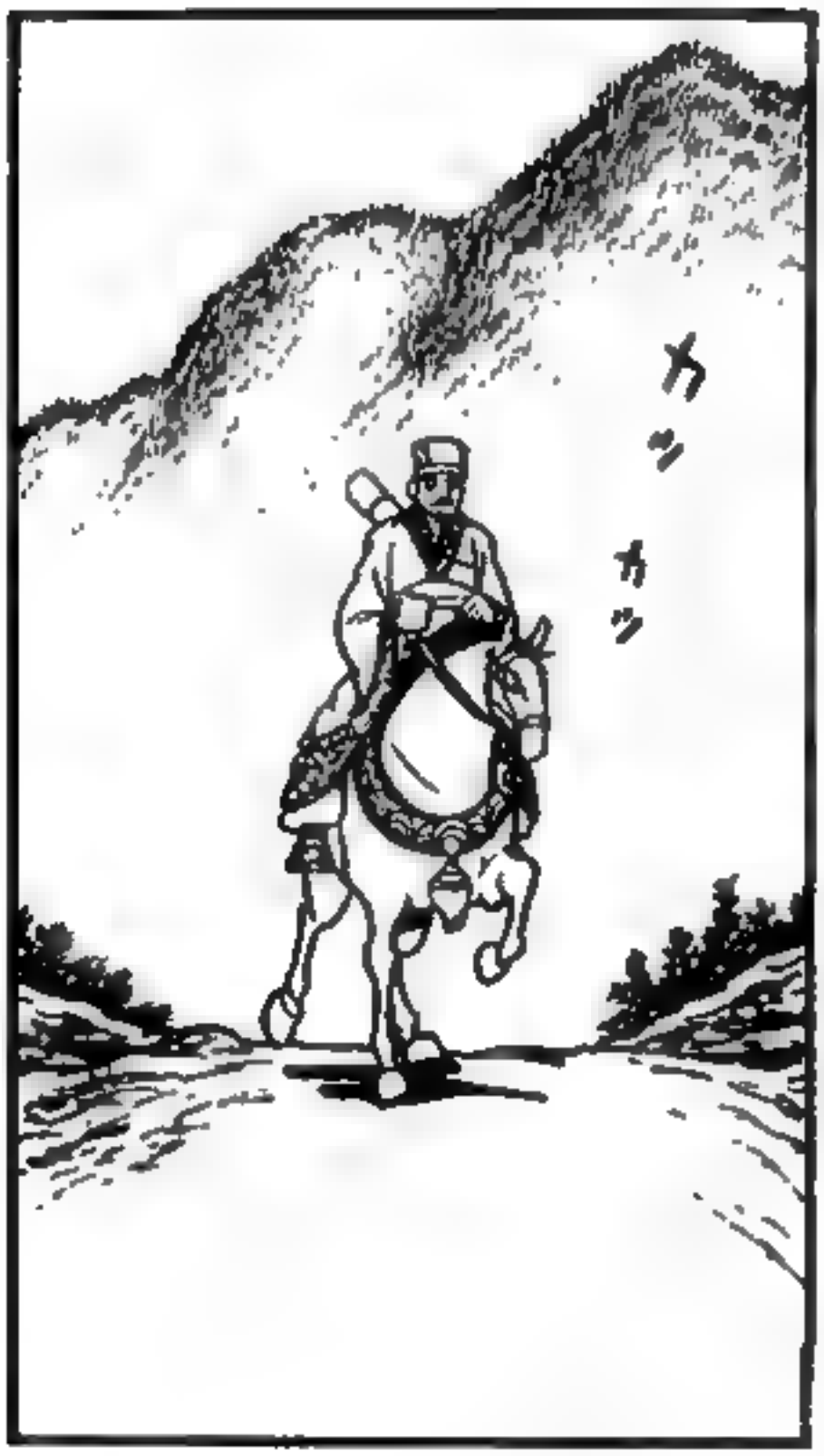

HERE, COMMANDER.
BRING THE MEDICINE!


...
PLEASE LEAVE THE CURRENT SITUATION TO YOUR GENERALS. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR SIR TO DO NOW IS TO RECUPERATE.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HM?

I AM A MESSENGER FROM JINGZHOU.

HALT! IDENTIFY YOUR-SELF!

PLEASE PASS THIS ONTO ZHOU YU.

EXCUSE ME THEN.

YES, CAPTAIN.

TAKE THIS TO THE COMMANDER AT ONCE.

PARDON THE INTRUSION, COMMANDER, BUT A MESSENGER FROM JINGZHOU HAS JUST DELIVERED THIS LETTER...

GREETINGS, MY DEAR FRIEND ZHOU YU. IT IS A PITY WE HAVEN'T MET SINCE OUR COLLABORATION DURING THE BATTLE OF RED CLIFFS. BUT IN ANY CASE, I'VE RECENTLY HEARD YOU INTEND TO CONQUER SHU, THAT IS TO SAY, YIZHOU. HOWEVER, YIZHOU'S CITIZENS ARE HARD-HEADED AND ITS TERRAIN IS MOUNTAINOUS. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH LIU ZHANG, THE LORD OF YIZHOU, IS SAID TO BE FOOLISH, HE IS STILL CAPABLE ENOUGH TO DEFEND HIS DOMAIN. THUS I FEAR IT WILL BE QUITE DIFFICULT TO TAKE YIZHOU EVEN IF WU'S ENTIRE FORCES WERE TO MOBILIZE.

AND THOUGH SOME MIGHT SAY CAO CAO DARES NOT TO ATTACK THE SOUTHLANDS AFTER HIS CRUSHING DEFEAT AT RED CLIFFS, THE CHANCELLOR WHO RULES TWO-THIRDS OF HAN'S FORMER TERRITORIES IS NOT SO MEEK AS TO EASILY GIVE UP HIS AMBITIONS OF TOTAL PACIFICATION. AS SUCH, SETTING OUT ON A LONG CAMPAIGN TO TAKE YIZHOU WILL SURELY CAUSE CAO CAO'S HORDES TO CROSS THE YANGTZE RIVER AND OVERRUN THE SOUTHLANDS. AS YOUR DEAR FRIEND, I CANNOT HELP BUT DISSUADE YOU FROM CARRYING OUT SUCH A RISKY ENDEAVOR. I HOPE YOU WILL COME TO YOUR SENSES AND MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE.

SINCERELY, ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING

MY LIES, MY ACTIONS, MY HEART... WHAT I PLANNED TO DO AND WHAT I FALSELY CLAIMED TO DO... HE READ ME THROUGH AND THROUGH...

KONGMING SAW THROUGH EVERYTHING FROM THE START...

HOW CRUEL THE HEAVENS ARE! HAVING BORN YU, WHEREFORE LIANG AS WELL!?

COUGH!

SIR!

SIR!

G... GIVE ME... BRUSH AND PAPER...

MY LIFE ENDS HERE...

GIVE... THIS TO... OUR LORD...

YOU MUST NOT LOSE HOPE, SIR. YOU ARE STILL FAR TOO YOUNG.

I'LL LEAVE OUR LORD TO YOU ALL.

I KNOW MY BODY BEST... ITS TIME HAS COME.

SERVE HIM W...

COM-
MANDER
ZHOU!

AHH!

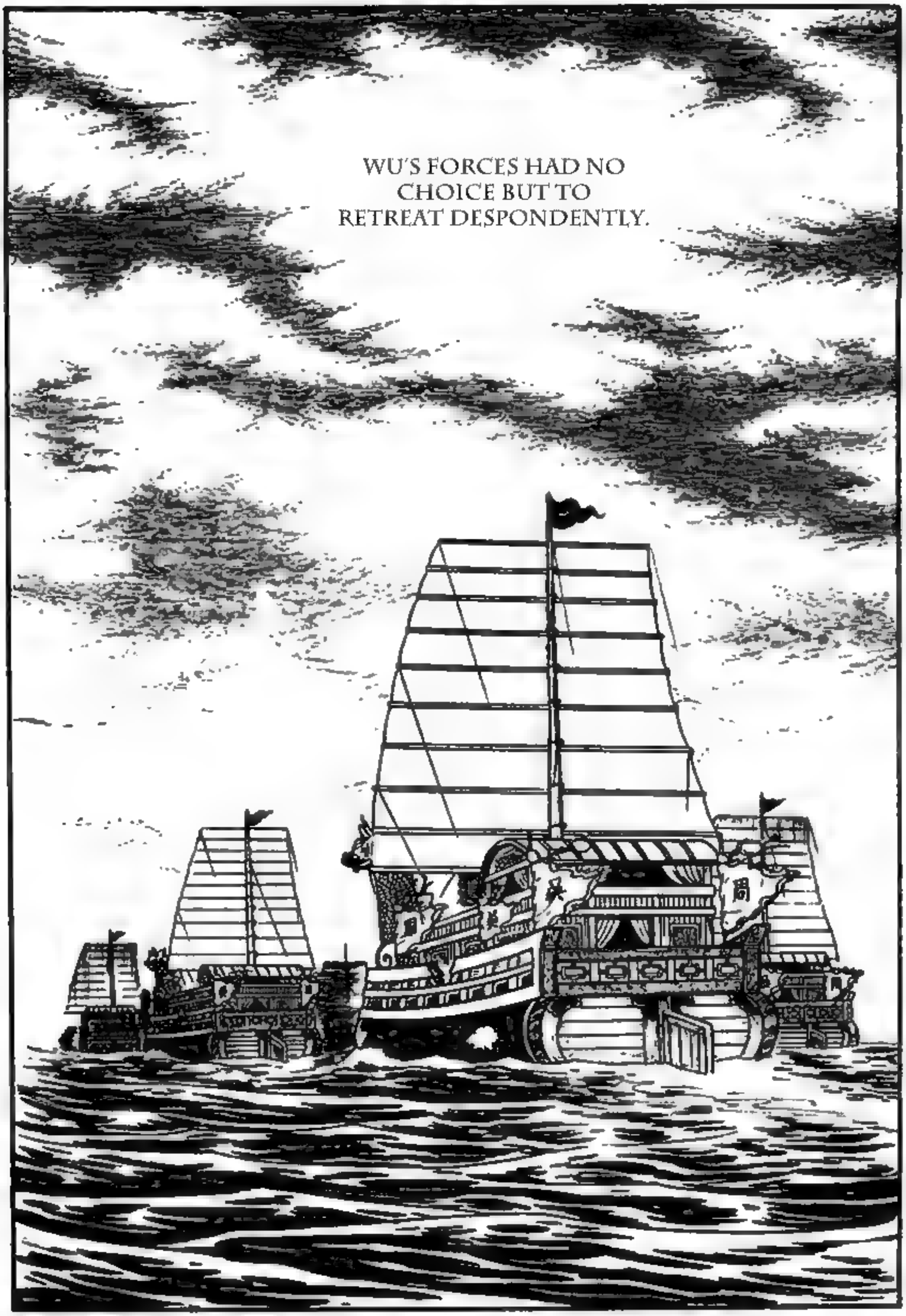
BUT THERE
WAS NO
REPLY TO
BE HEARD

UU...

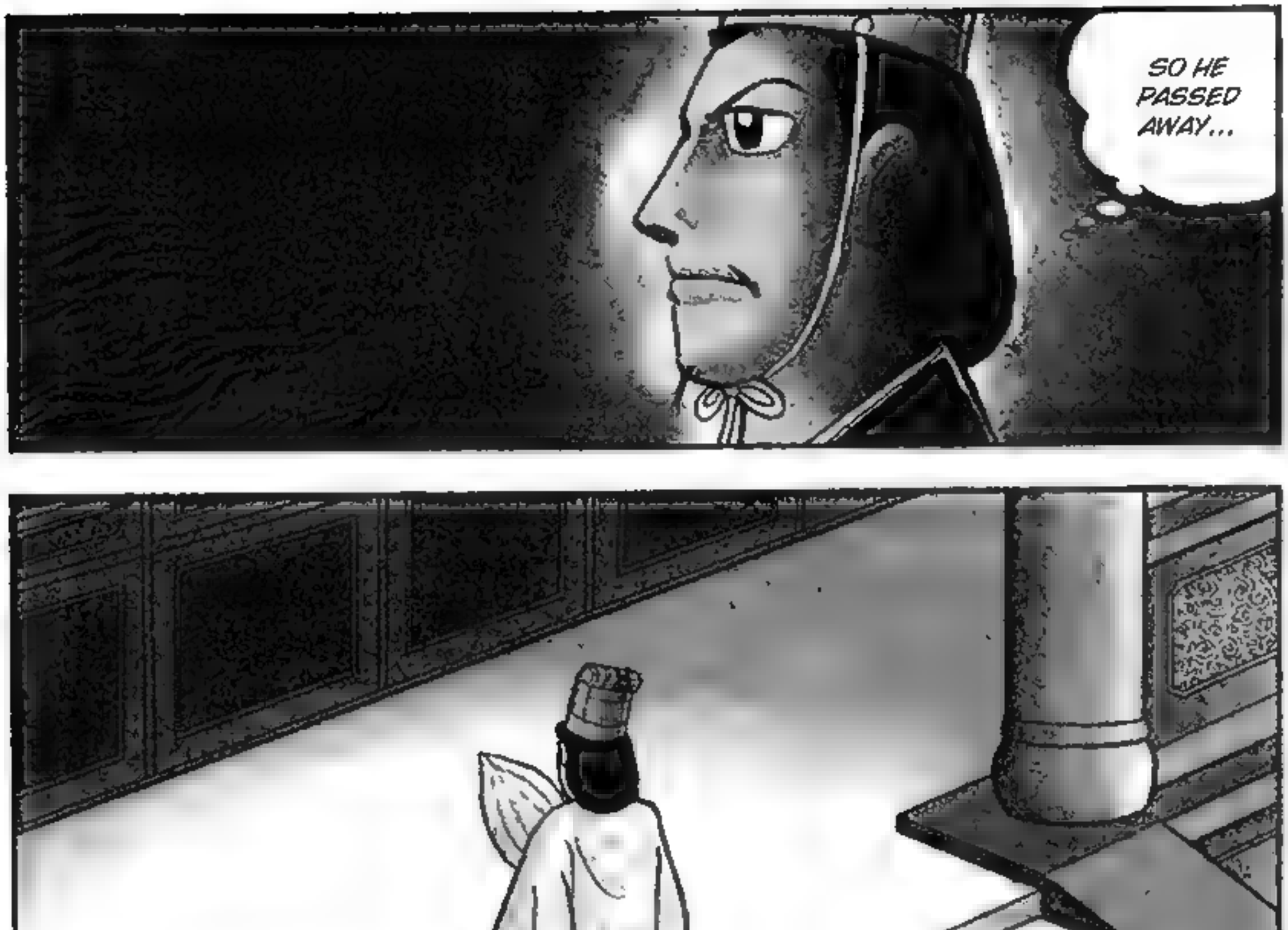
COM-
MANDER...

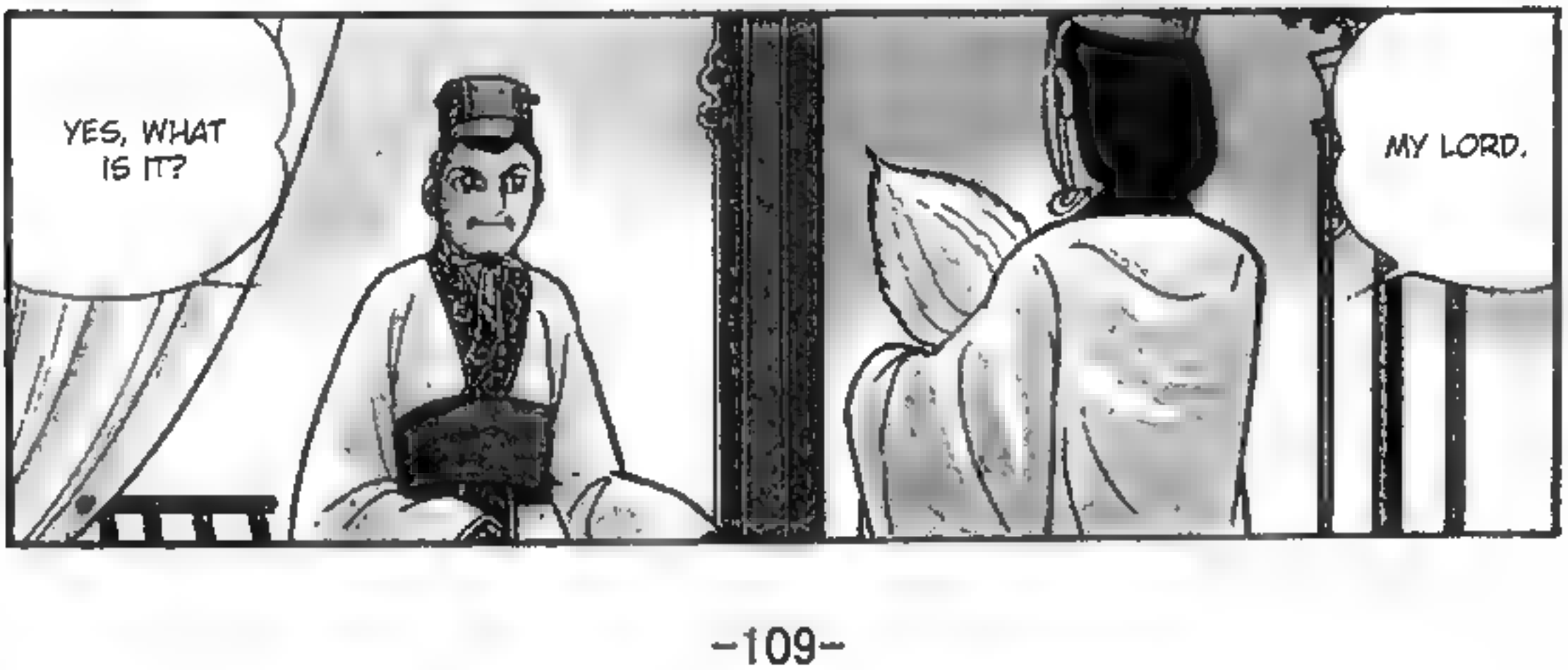
AND SO THE
CURTAINS FELL
ON THE LIFE OF
ZHOU YU, WU'S
GREATEST TALENT
HE WAS 36 YEARS
OLD AT THE TIME
OF HIS DEATH

WU'S FORCES HAD NO
CHOICE BUT TO
RETREAT DESPONDENTLY.



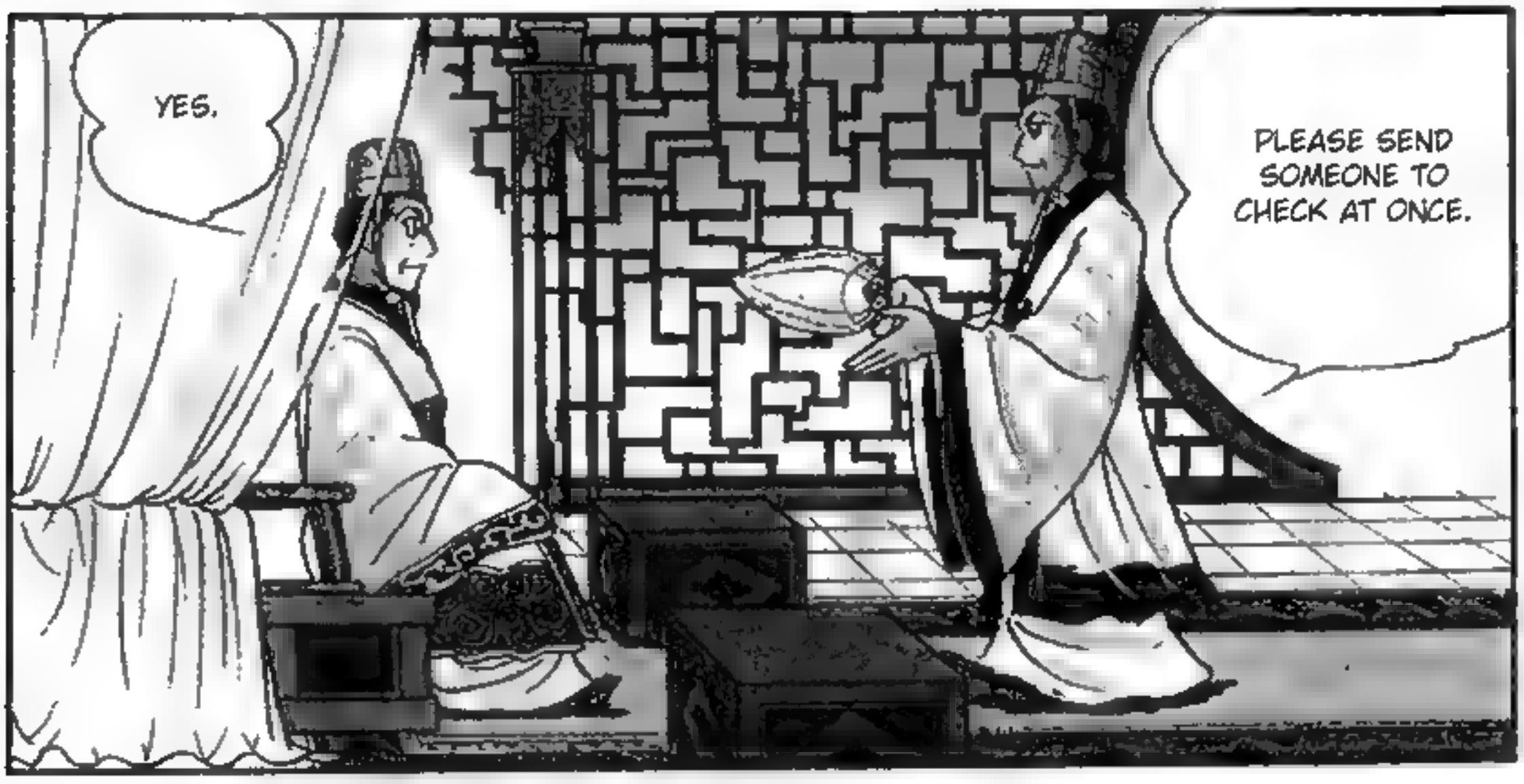
EULOGY

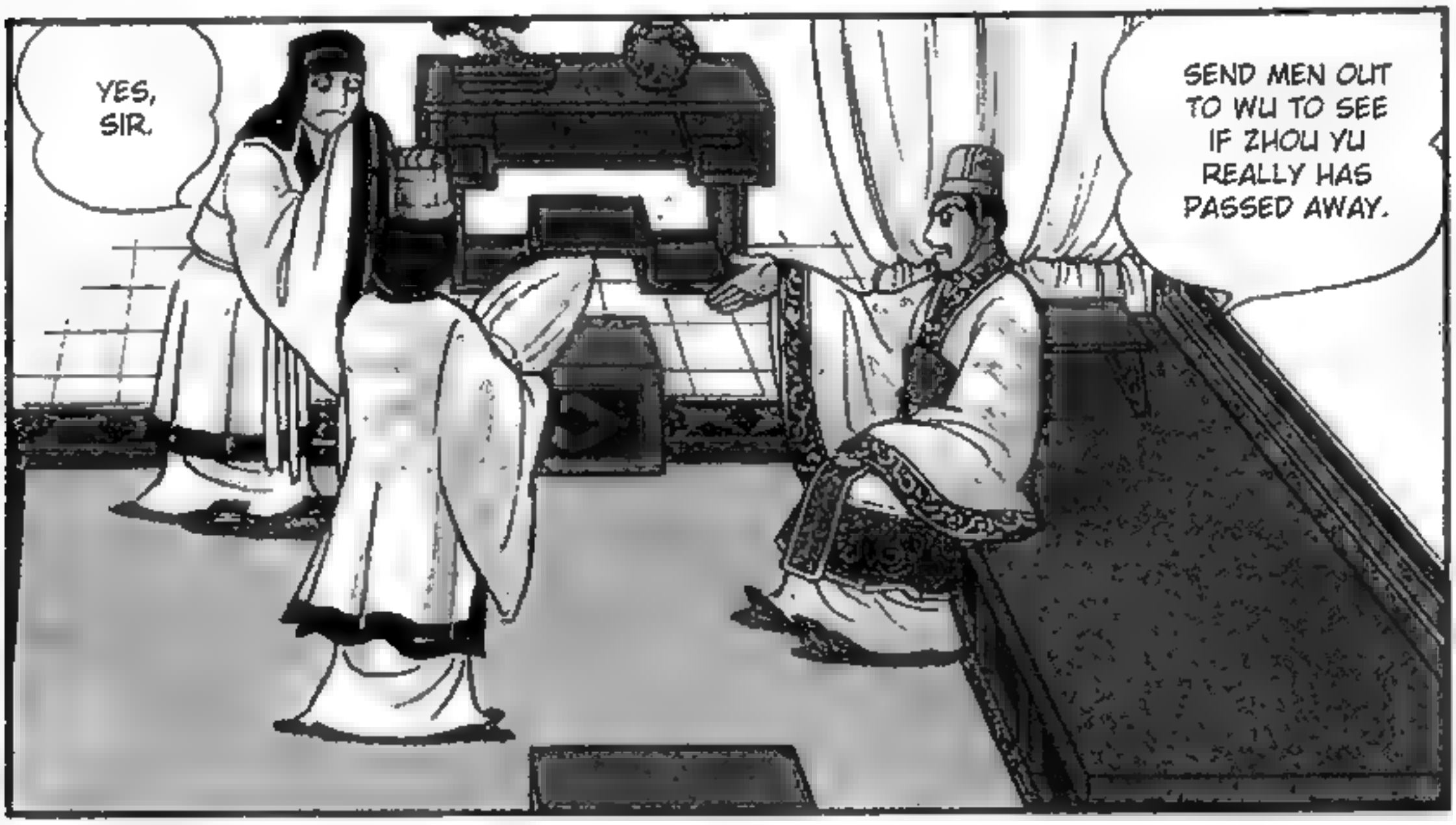

SO HE PASSED AWAY...


YES, WHAT IS IT?
MY LORD.

WHAT!?

BY MY READING OF THE STARS, IT APPEARS THAT ZHOU YU HAS PASSED AWAY.


YES.
PLEASE SEND SOMEONE TO CHECK AT ONCE.


YES, SIR.
SEND MEN OUT TO WU TO SEE IF ZHOU YU REALLY HAS PASSED AWAY.

YES, SIR.
SO HE REALLY DID PASS AWAY!?

JUST BEFORE HIS FINAL MOMENTS, ZHOU YU APPARENTLY WROTE A LETTER IN WHICH HE RECOMMENDED LU SU TO REPLACE HIM AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

AND HAS WU DONE ANYTHING TO DEAL WITH HIS DEATH?

LU SU IS RECOGNIZED BY HIS PEERS AS A LOYAL AND DILLIGENT MAN SO THERE WERE NO OBJECTIONS IN AP-POINTING HIM AS THE NEXT COMMANDER.

AND?

WHAT?

MY LORD, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO GO VISIT WU.

I SEE... TO THINK WU'S STAR WOULD FALL AT LAST...

FROM MY READING OF THE STARS, IT APPEARS THAT THERE ARE MANY ABLE GENERALS GATHERED IN THE EAST RIGHT NOW. AND SO, USING ZHOU YU'S FUNERAL AS A PRETEXT, I WOULD LIKE TO GO SEE IF I CAN RECRUIT ANY TALENTED MEN FOR MY LORD'S CAUSE.

THEY WANTED ME DEAD WHEN ZHOU YU WAS ALIVE AS WELL BUT THAT NEVER STOPPED ME FROM GOING BEFORE. SO WHY SHOULD I BE AFRAID NOW?

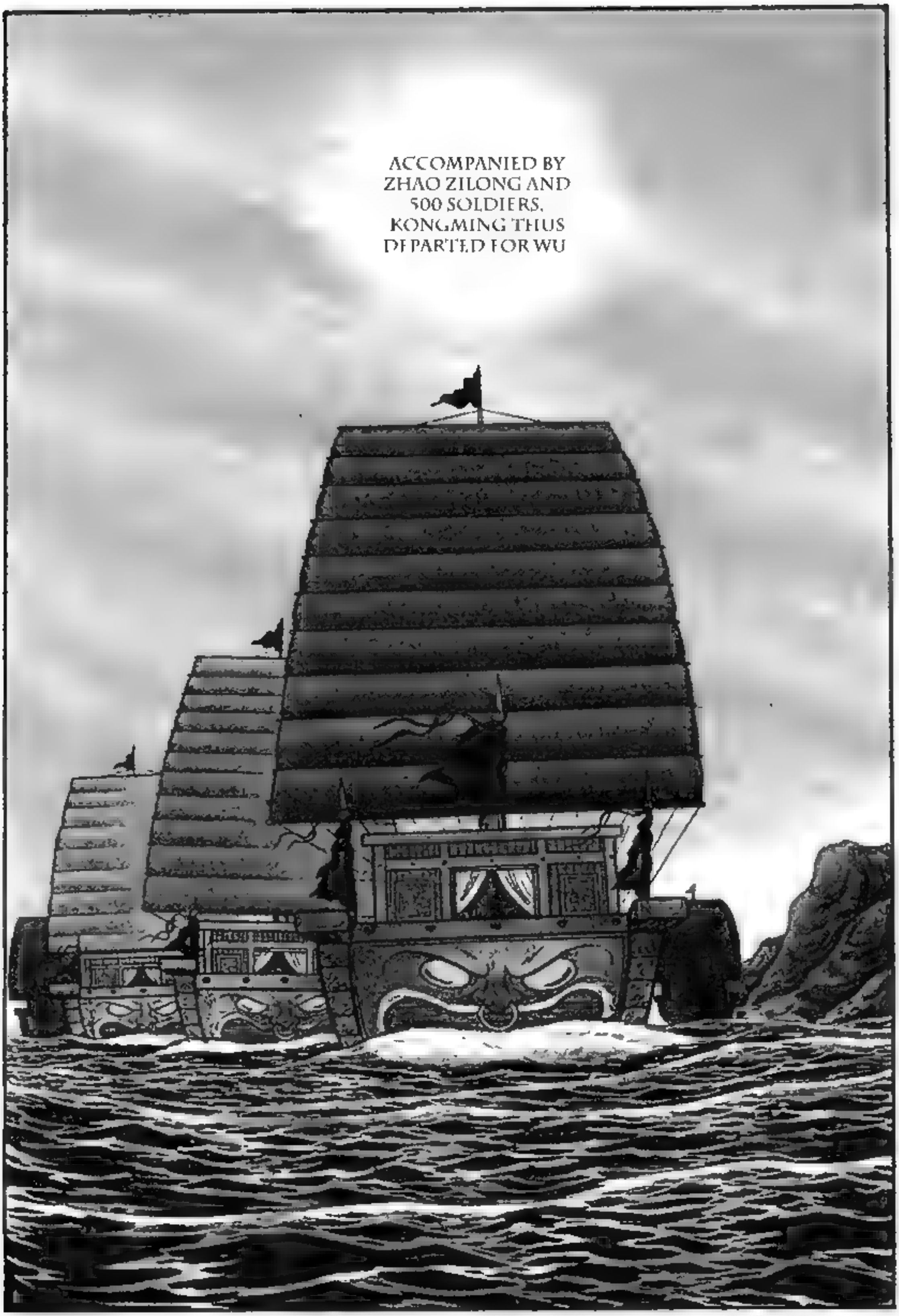
BUT WOULDN'T THE OFFICERS OF WU WANT YOU DEAD AFTER THE LATEST INCIDENT?

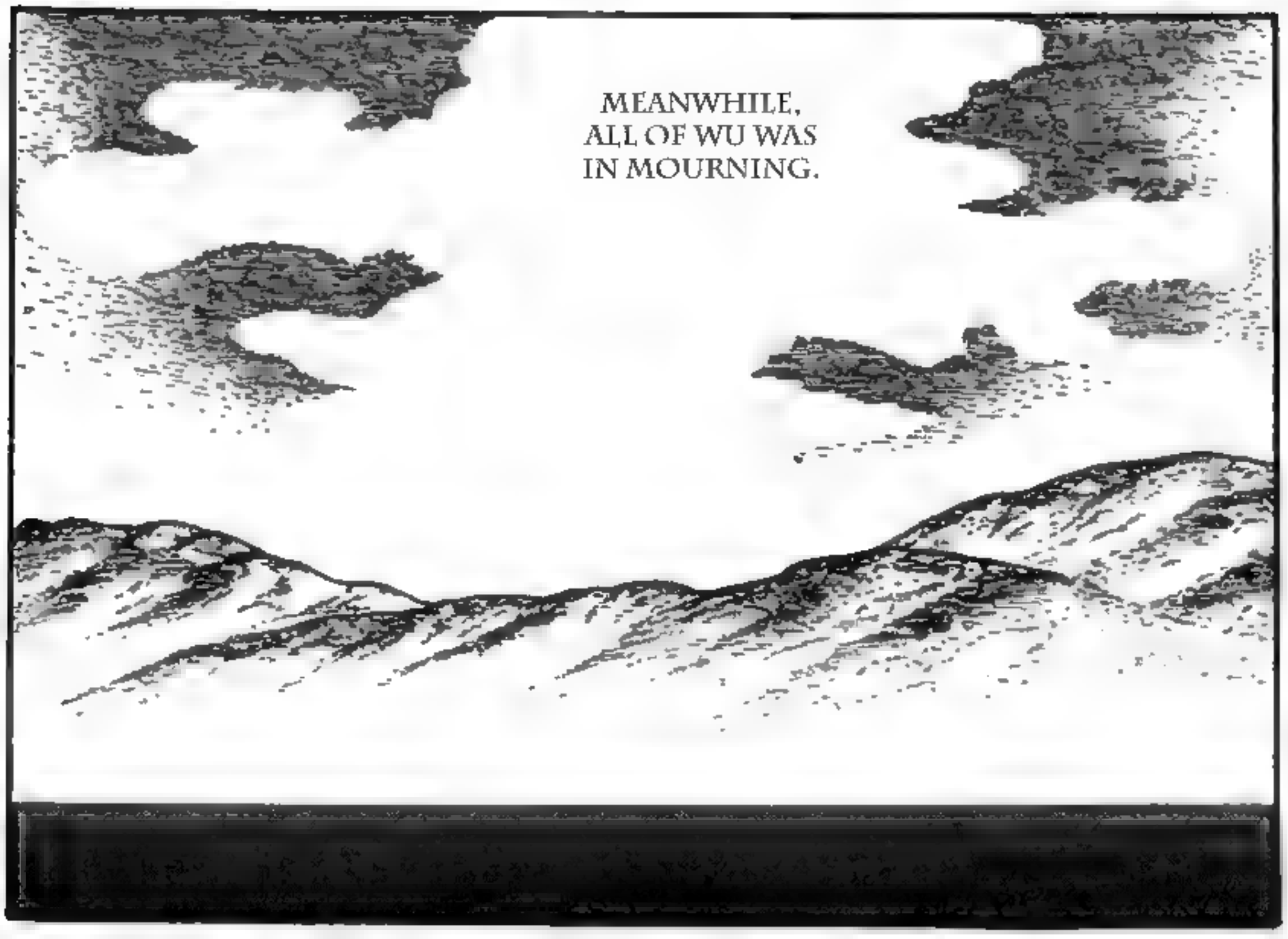
REST ASSURED, MY LORD.

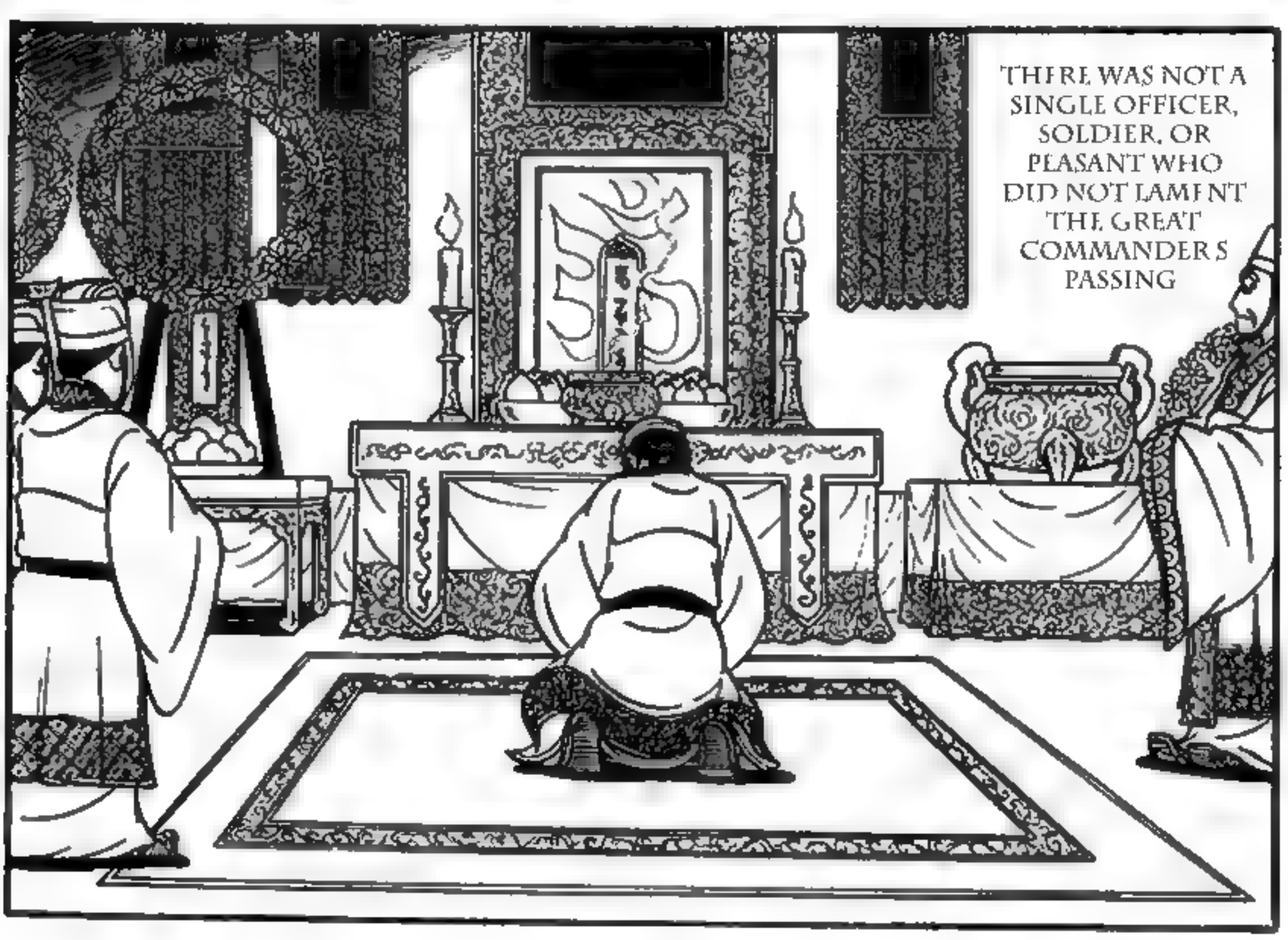
WELL, I'M SURE YOU'VE ALREADY PLANNED SOMETHING BUT I CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL A LITTLE WORRIED FOR YOUR SAKE.

ALRIGHT THEN.

ZHAO ZILONG AND 500 BODYGUARDS WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO KEEP ME SAFE.


ACCOMPANIED BY
ZHAO ZILONG AND
500 SOLDIERS,
KONGMING THUS
DEPARTED FOR WU


MEANWHILE, ALL OF WU WAS IN MOURNING.


THERE WAS NOT A SINGLE OFFICER, SOLDIER, OR PEASANT WHO DID NOT LAMENT THE GREAT COMMANDER'S PASSING

WHAT!?
PARDON MY INTRUSION BUT ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING HAS JUST COME FROM JINGZHOU TO PAY HIS RESPECTS TO THE LATE COMMANDER.
ZHUGE LIANG!?
NOW'S OUR BEST CHANCE TO KILL HIM!
HOW DARE HE SHOW HIS FACE AROUND HERE AFTER WHAT HE DID!

WAIT!
WAIT!

YES! LET US KILL HIM TO AVENGE ZHOU YU!

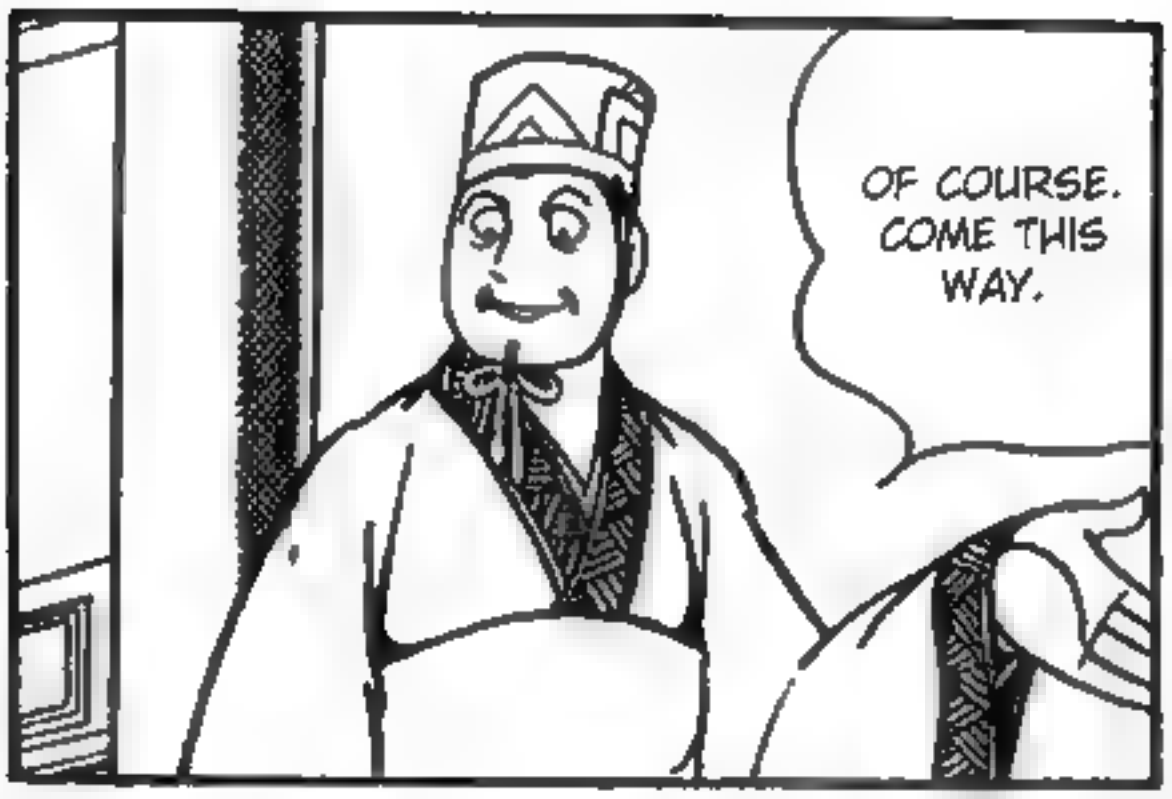
NOT ONLY THAT, KILLING ZHUGE LIANG WILL BRING OUR TWO STATES TO WAR AND GIVE CAO CAO THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR ANOTHER ATTEMPT AT CONQUEST!

WHAT WILL THE WORLD SAY WHEN THEY HEAR WE KILLED A GUEST TO A FUNERAL!?

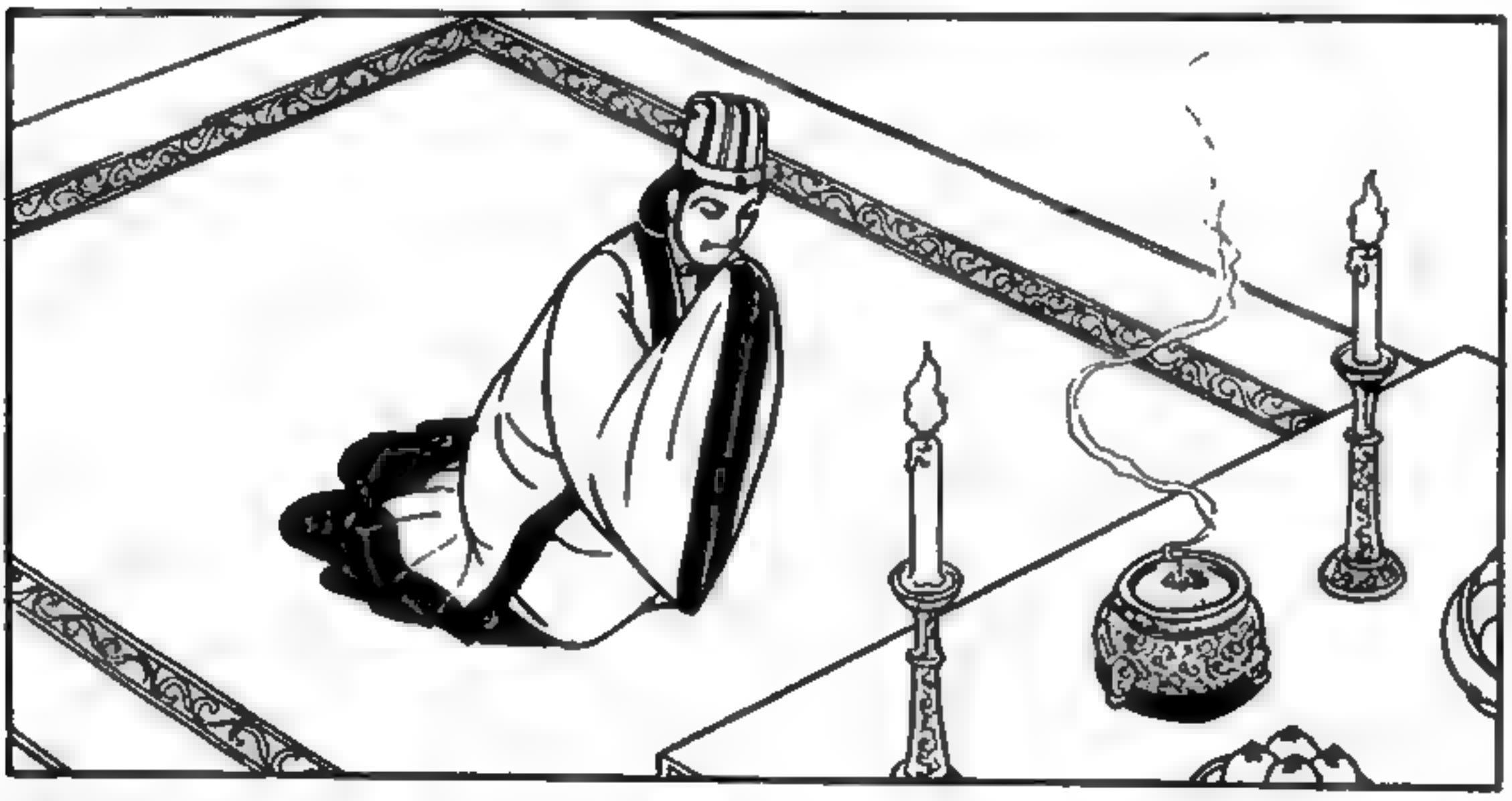
NGHH...
SO DO NOT LAY A FINGER ON HIM. THAT'S AN ORDER.

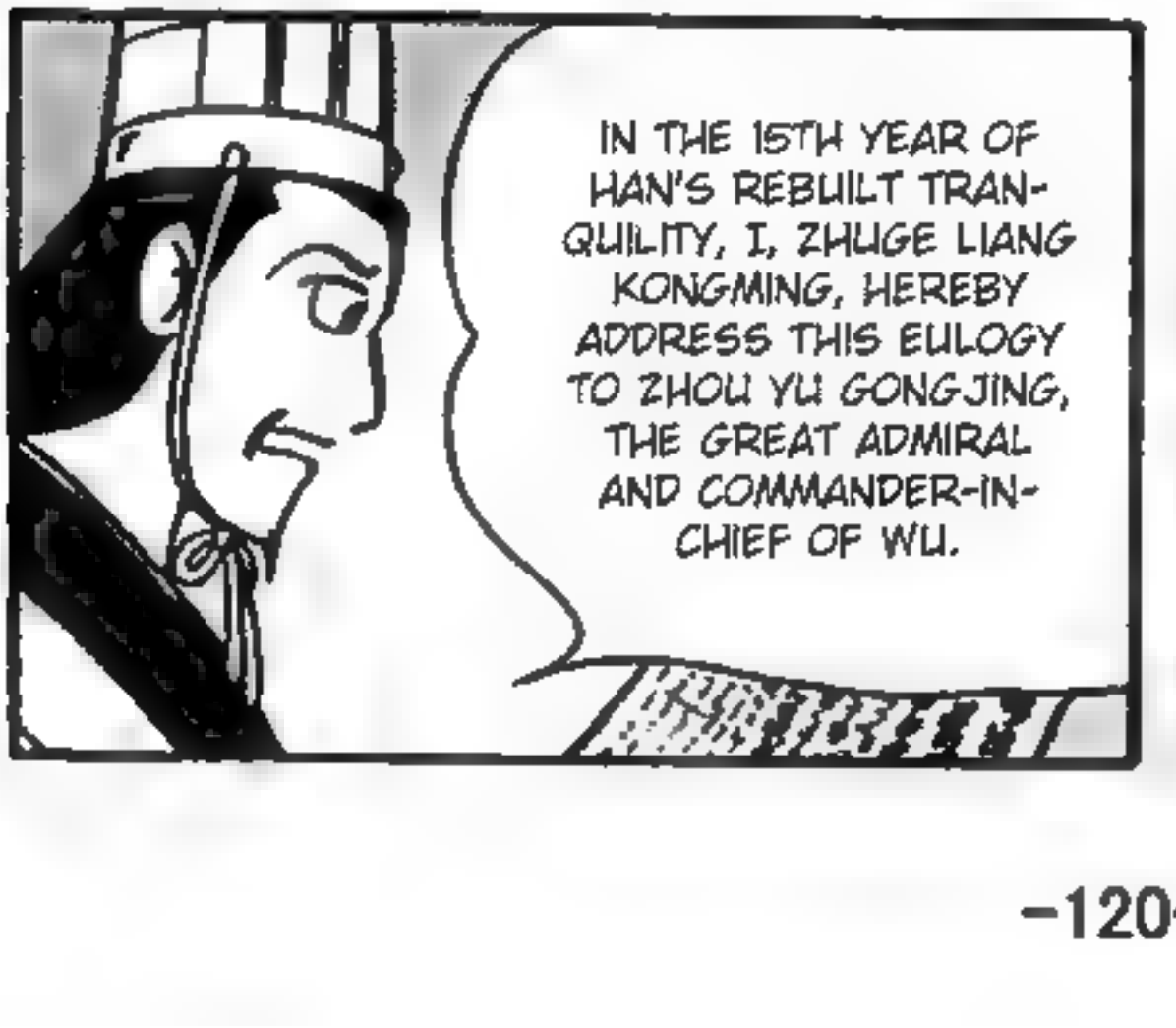
I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD THE NEWS. THE WORLD HAS TRULY LOST A GREAT HERO.

I THANK YOU FOR MAKING THE LONG TRIP HERE TO PAY RESPECTS TO ZHOU YU.


OF COURSE. COME THIS WAY.

WOULD YOU ALLOW ME TO DELIVER A EULOGY FOR HIS SAKE?



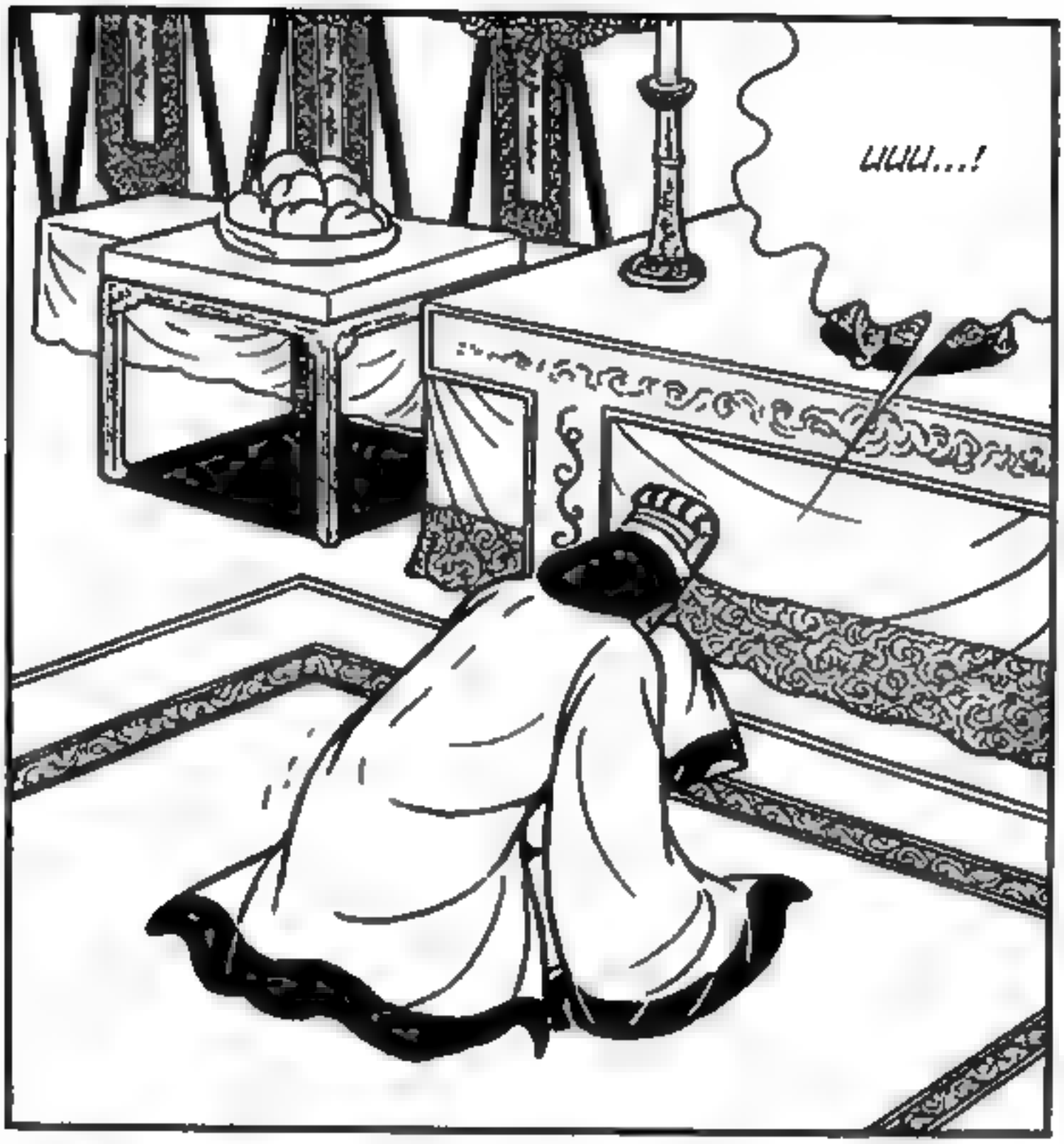

IN THE 15TH YEAR OF HAN'S REBUILT TRANQUILITY, I, ZHUGE LIANG KONGMING, HEREBY ADDRESS THIS EULOGY TO ZHOU YU GONGJING, THE GREAT ADMIRAL AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF WU.

YOU WERE BOTH WISE AND BRAVE, SLAYING THE WICKED WITH FIRE AND SAVING THE HELPLESS FROM THEIR DEATHS.

O' GONGJIN, THE HEAVENS HAVE UNFAIRLY TOOK YOU AWAY WHILE STILL IN THE PRIME OF YOUR YOUTH. THOUGH THE LIFESPANS OF WE MORTALS IS HEAVEN'S CHOICE, HOW COULD WE NOT LAMENT WITH BROKEN HEARTS WHEN SOMEONE SO DEAR IS TAKEN AWAY?

BUT THE MORE I THINK OF YOUR TALENTS AND HEROIC DEEDS, THE MORE MY EYES TURN RED FROM TEARS. THOUGH YOUR LOYAL HEART AND GALLANT SPIRIT HAVE COME TO AN END AT THE TENDER AGE OF 36, YOUR NAME SHALL BE REMEMBERED FOR GENERATIONS AND GENERATIONS.

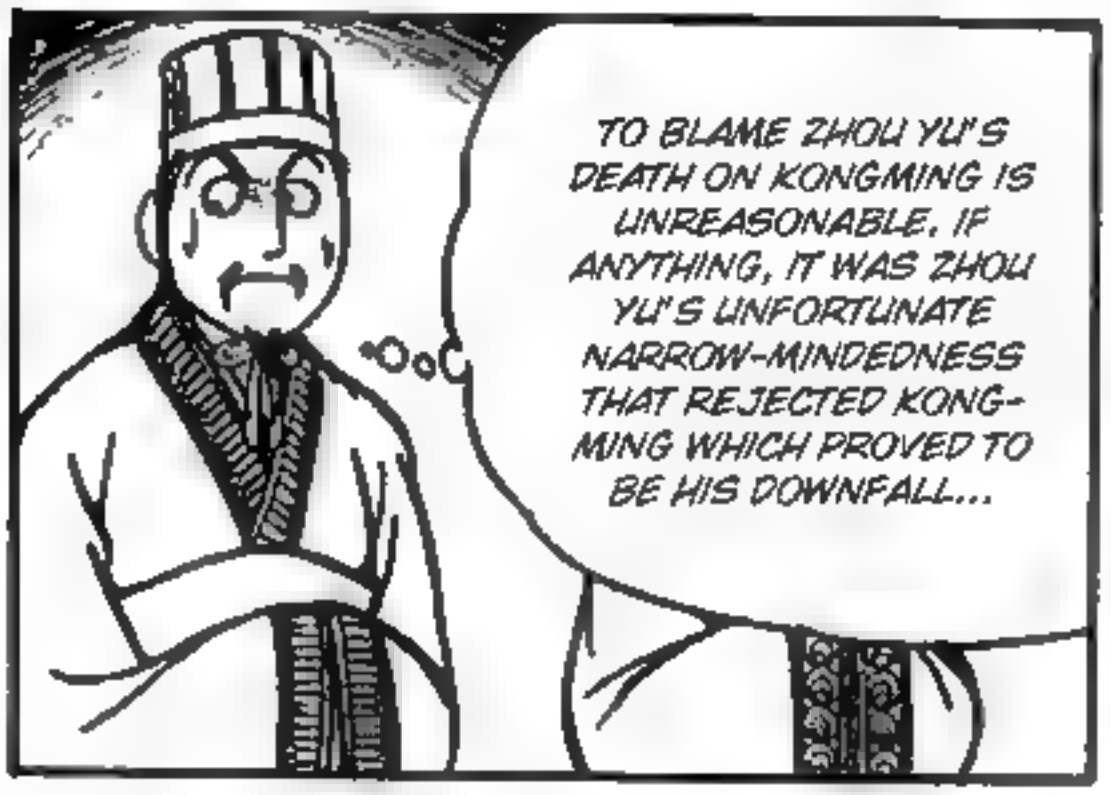
AS TALENTLESS AS I AM, I WAS GLAD TO HAVE ASSISTED YOU IN FENDING OFF CAO CAO AND HELPING THE IMPERIAL LIU FAMILY. TRULY, THERE WOULD BE NOTHING TO FEAR IF YOU WERE STILL HERE TO LEND US YOUR GUIDANCE ON HOW TO PROTECT THE SOUTHLANDS.


UUU...!

BUT ALAS! YOUR PARTING HAS LEFT US IN DESPAIR. IF THE SPIRITS CAN READ THE HEARTS OF MORTAL MEN, THEN PLEASE READ MY HEART, FOR THERE WILL BE NO OTHER TO UNDERSTAND IT AS YOU DO.

...

...


TO BLAME ZHOU YU'S DEATH ON KONGMING IS UNREASONABLE. IF ANYTHING, IT WAS ZHOU YU'S UNFORTUNATE NARROW-MINDEDNESS THAT REJECTED KONGMING WHICH PROVED TO BE HIS DOWNFALL...

THOUGH RELATIONS BETWEEN THOSE TWO WERE NEVER GOOD AND ZHOU YU EVEN ATTEMPTED TO KILL KONGMING ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, I NEVER REALIZED HOW HIGHLY HE THOUGHT OF OUR COMMANDER...

I WAS WRONG TO HAVE DESPISED ZHUGE LIANG FOR THE COMMANDER'S DEATH...
I'M SURE HIS SPIRIT WAS PLEASED TO HEAR YOUR EULOGY.
ZHOU YU'S PASSING IS A TRAGIC LOSS NOT JUST FOR WU BUT THE ENTIRE WORLD.
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFER BUT I'M AFRAID I MUST EXCUSE MYSELF.
IN ANY CASE, YOU SHOULD REST HERE AWHILE AFTER THE LONG TRIP HERE.

THEN ALLOW ME TO AT LEAST SEE YOU OFF.

YES, I'M QUITE WORRIED AT HAVING TO FILL ZHOU YU'S SHOES.

I HOPE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CARRY YOUR NEW DUTIES AND RESPONSI-BILITIES OUT WELL, LU SU.

FAREWELL, THEN.

?

HALT!

YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST STROLL IN TO THE FUNERAL OF THE MAN YOU HELPED KILL!? DO YOU THINK WU IS ONLY FULL OF BRAINLESS IDIOTS!?

CEASE THIS AT ONCE!

?

WHY IF IT ISN'T PANG TONG!

JUST A LITTLE JEST.

HAHA, MY BAD, MY BAD.

PANG TONG!? DON'T YOU THINK YOUR JOKE WAS IN VERY BAD TASTE?

WELL THEN, I'LL EXCUSE MYSELF HERE. GOOD-BYE, SIRS.

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

HOW ABOUT WE HAVE A DRINK ON MY BOAT?

THIS WAY.

I CAME HERE AFTER SEEING A GENERAL'S STAR TO THE EAST IN THE NIGHT SKY, YOU KNOW. PERHAPS OUR CHANCE MEETING TODAY WAS FATE.

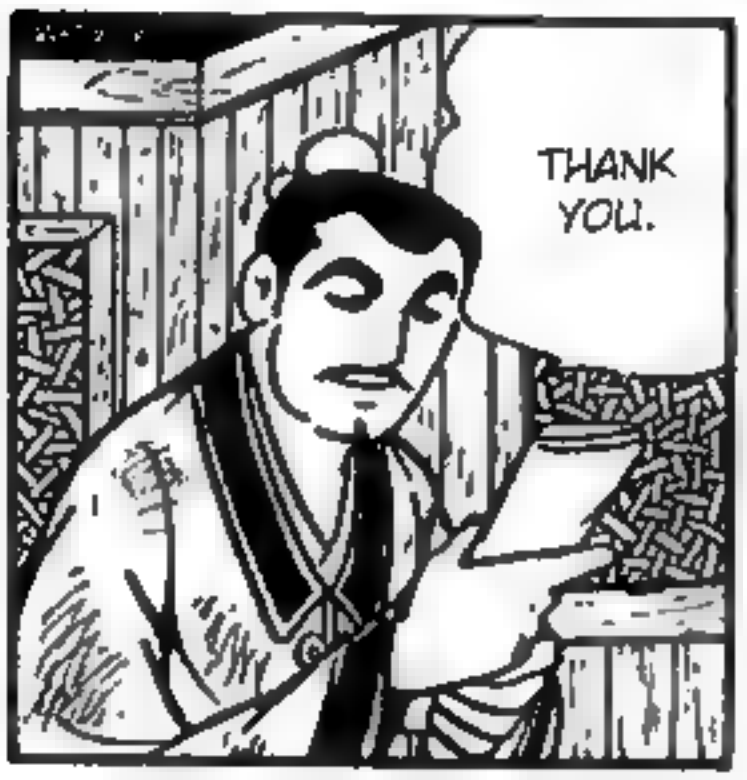
WELL, I'VE GOT NO REAL PLACE TO GO SO I'VE BEEN SPENDING MY TIME QUIETLY OUT HERE.

I HAD HEARD YOU FLED TO WU WHEN JINGZHOU WAS CONQUERED BY CAO CAO BUT I NEVER IMAGINED I'D BE MEETING YOU HERE TODAY.

SO WHAT DO YOU SAY? WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME TO JINGZHOU AND SERVE LIU BEI WITH ME? HE'S A KIND AND VIRTUOUS LORD WHO'LL SURELY GIVE YOU THE CHANCE TO SPREAD YOUR WINGS IF YOU WISH.

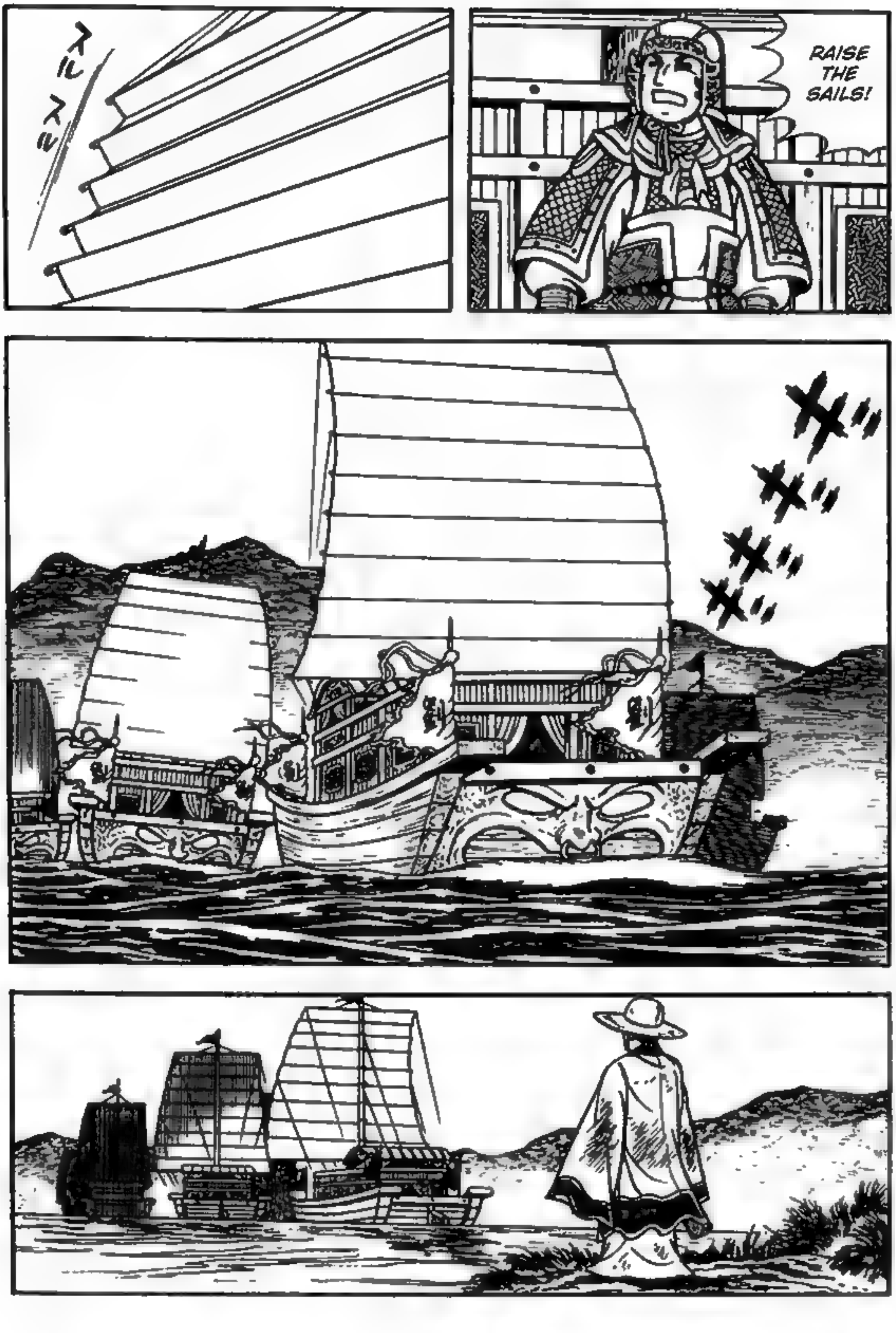
HMM... GIVE ME SOME TIME TO THINK.

I DOUBT SUN QUAN WOULD BUY YOUR TALENTS AS HIGHLY AS MY LORD.


THANK YOU.

OF COURSE. I'LL WRITE YOU A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION THAT YOU CAN SHOW TO MY LORD IF YOU DO DECIDE TO SERVE HIM.

THEN I'LL EXCUSE MYSELF FOR TODAY.


RAISE THE SAILS!

THE PHOENIX SETS FORTH

ALTHOUGH I'VE BEEN INSTATED TO THE POST OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AS PER ZHOU YU'S REQUEST, I MUST CONFESS THAT I AM NOT AS CAPABLE AS SOME OTHERS IN WU.
AH YES, I'VE HEARD OF MASTER PANG TONG. HOW WOULD HE COMPARE TO ZHOU YU?
YES, HE IS PANG TONG, COURTESY NAME SHIYUAN. HE IS ALSO COMMONLY KNOWN BY HIS NICKNAME FENGCHU.*
DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE IN MIND?

*LITERALLY MEANING "YOUNG PHOENIX"

I SEE.

IT WOULD NOT BE PROPER TO COMPARE HIM TO A RECENTLY DECEASED MAN. HOWEVER, I *CAN* SAY THAT HE DOES NOT PALE IN COMPARISON TO KONGMING'S SKILLS.

HERE!?

RIGHT HERE IN WU.

AND WHERE DOES HE LIVE RIGHT NOW?

THEN PLEASE CALL HIM HERE AT ONCE.

I'LL BE EAGERLY ANTICIPATING HIS ARRIVAL.

YES, MY LORD.

AH, YES. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMING.

HELLO, SIR. I AM PANG TONG.

EATING, DRINKING, AND EVENTUALLY DYING AS ALL MORTALS DO.

MIGHT I ASK WHAT SORT OF SKILLS YOU HAVE?

THEN WHAT ABOUT YOUR STUDIES?

YOU CALL EATING AND DYING A SKILL!?

WHAT KIND OF HALF-ASSED ANSWERS ARE THESE...?

I STUDY WHATEVER THE TIMES DICTATE TO BE IMPORTANT.

WHAT IF YOU WERE COMPARED TO ZHOU YU?

AND WHO IS WHICH!? ARE YOU A PEARL OR A STONE!?

A COMPARISON BETWEEN A PEARL AND A STONE.

HOW DARE YOU IMPLY ZHOU YU WAS A COMMON STONE...

I'LL LET YOU BE THE JUDGE OF THAT.

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH. YOU MAY EXCUSE YOURSELF.

LU SU!

I'M AFRAID MY LORD IS BEING FAR TOO RASH. I UNDERSTAND THAT MASTER PANG TONG MAY LOOK LIKE JUST AN UNIMPRESSIVE COMMONER, BUT THE CHAINING OF CAO CAO'S FLEET AT RED CLIFFS WAS ALL MADE POSSIBLE DUE TO PANG TONG'S WITS!

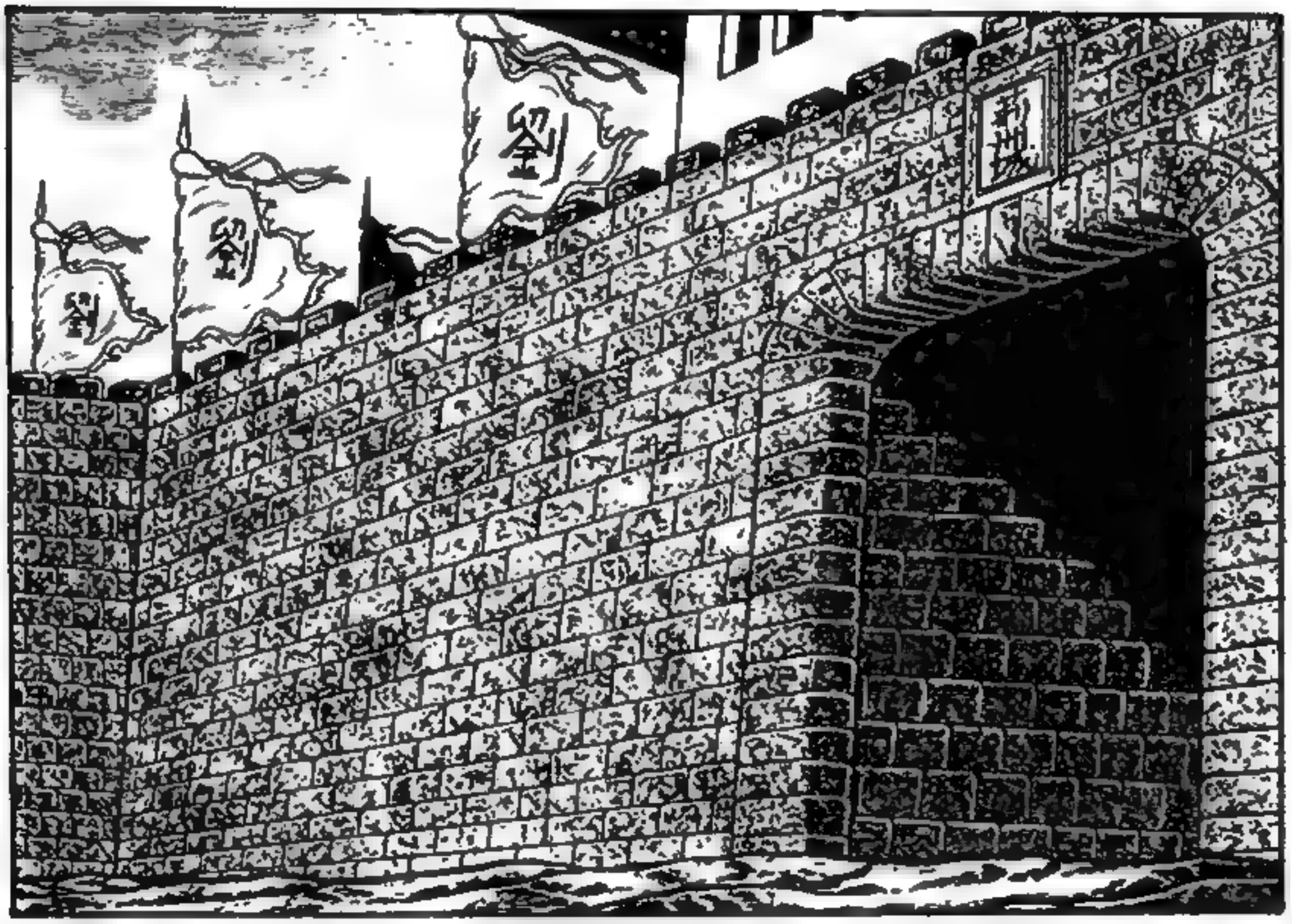
I HAVE NO NEED FOR THAT MAN.

THE WORLD IS VAST AND ABLE MEN ARE APLENTY. PLEASE FIND SOMEONE ELSE INSTEAD.

I DO NOT CARE. HE SIMPLY DOES NOT HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE FOR A HIGH POST.

.....

JINGZHOU
AT THIS TIME, ZHUGE LIANG HAD NOT YET RETURNED AS HE WAS BUSY SEARCHING OUT NEW TALENTS ACROSS LIU BEI'S 4 NEWLY ACQUIRED COMMANDERIES
BUT IT WAS DURING HIS ABSENCE THAT PANG TONG DECIDED TO COME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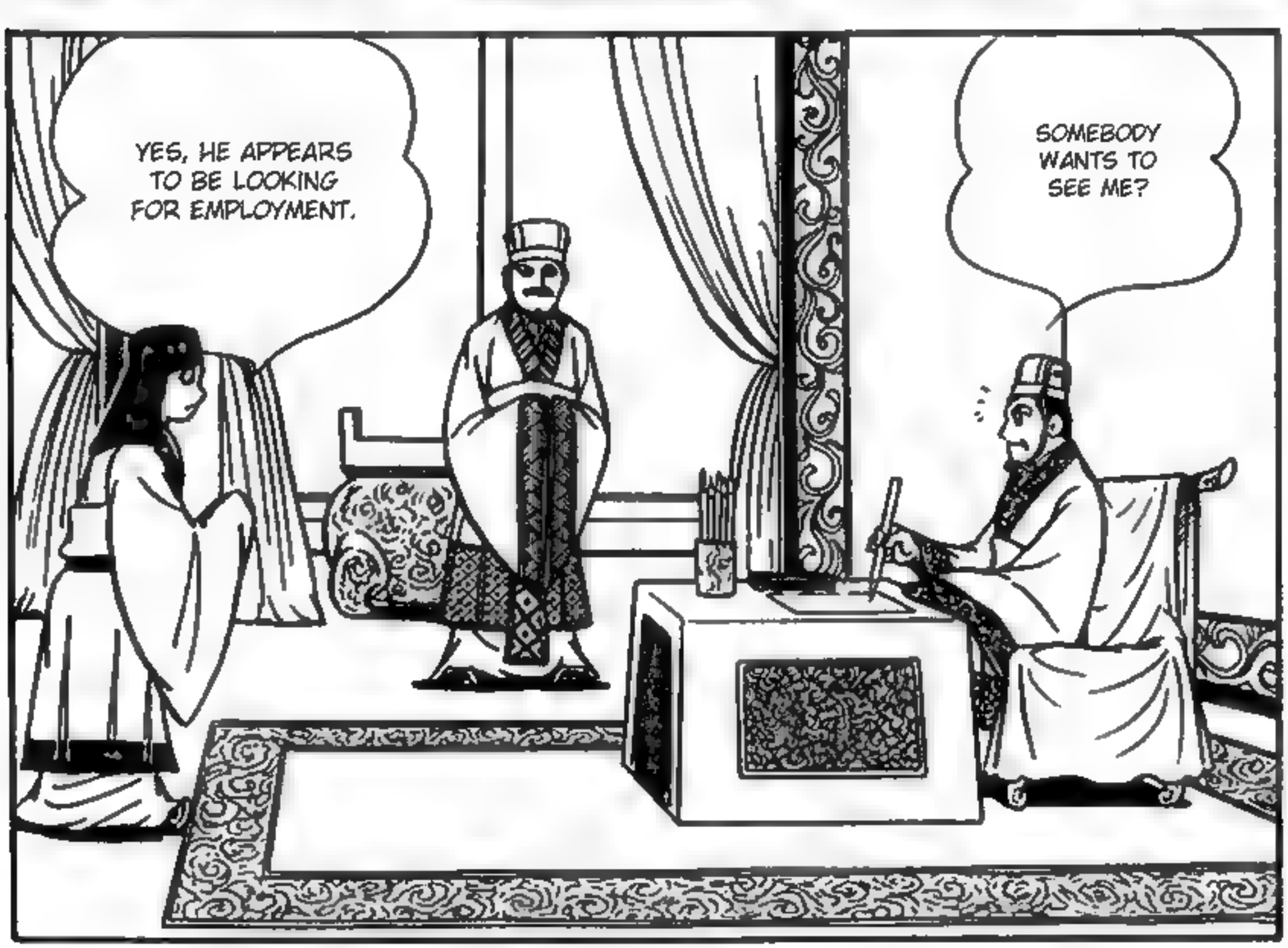

YES, HE APPEARS TO BE LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT.
SOMEBODY WANTS TO SEE ME?

HE IS PANG TONG OF XIANGYANG.

AND WHAT IS THIS MAN'S NAME?

NOT EXACTLY, BUT I REMEMBER KONGMING MENTIONING HIS NAME ONCE BEFORE.

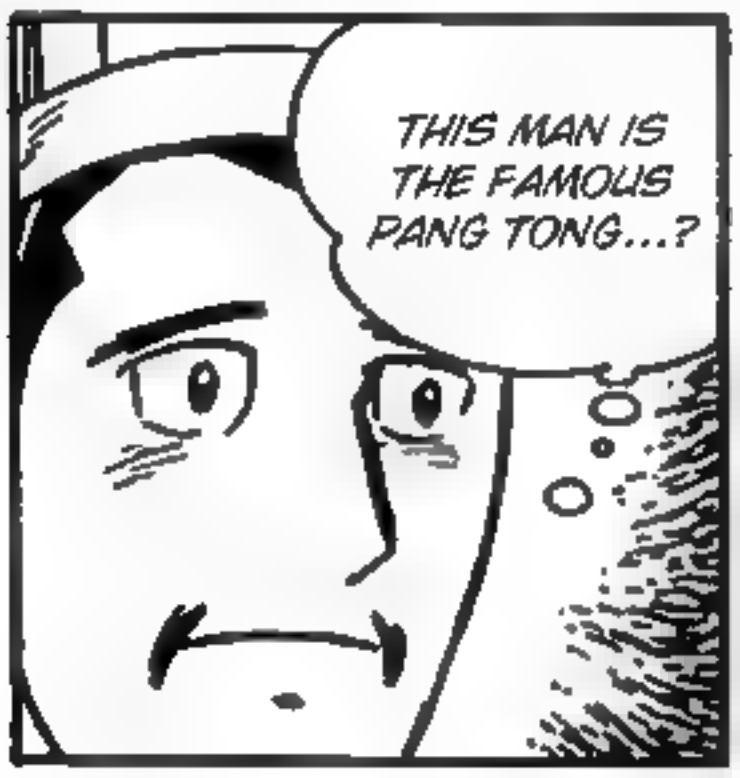
PANG TONG!?

ARE YOU ACQUAINTED WITH HIM, MY LORD?

YES, SIR.

IN ANY CASE, LET HIM IN.

GREETINGS, SIR. I AM PANG TONG.


THIS MAN IS THE FAMOUS PANG TONG...?

A PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU HERE, MASTER PANG TONG.

HIS DISHEVELED APPEARANCE ISN'T EXACTLY HELPING HIM IF HE'S LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT...

I HEARD SIR WAS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ABLE MEN AND SO I CAME TO SEE IF I COULD HELP IN ANY WAY.

NOW THEN, WHAT BRINGS A WELL-RESPECTED MAN SUCH AS YOURSELF HERE TODAY?

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M AFRAID THERE ARE NO EMPTY POSTS IN JINGZHOU SINCE THERE HAS BEEN NO WAR OR OTHER DISASTER TO DISRUPT ITS STABILITY AT THE CURRENT TIME.

AH, SO YOU SEEK A POST?

NO, WAIT!

I SEE... PLEASE EXCUSE ME THEN.

A SMALL VILLAGE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE? HMM, THAT MIGHT BE QUITE RELAXING.

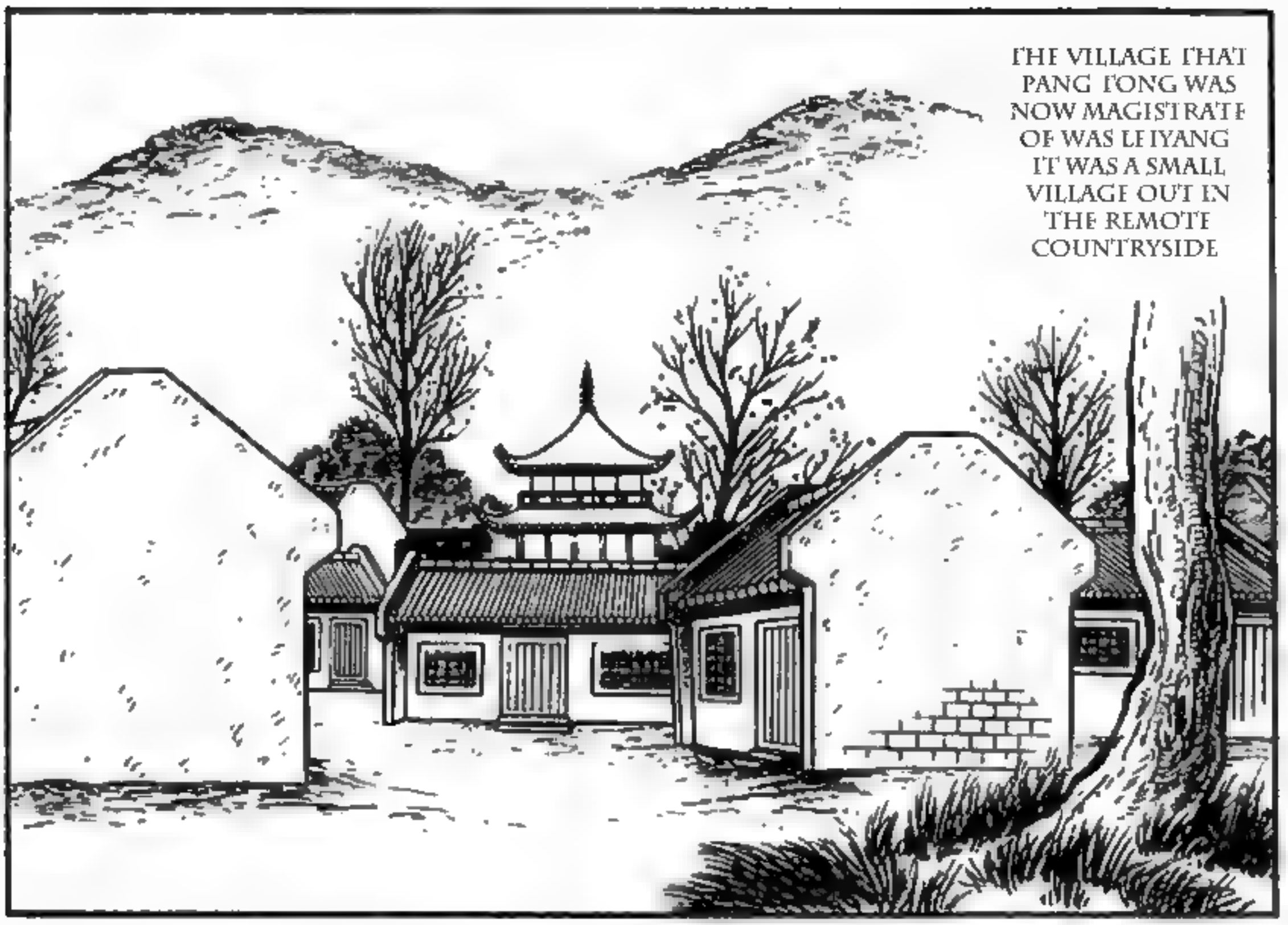
THERE IS A SMALL VILLAGE WHICH NEEDS A MAGISTRATE RIGHT NOW. IF YOU'D LIKE, I CAN ASSIGN YOU TO THAT POST AT LEAST...

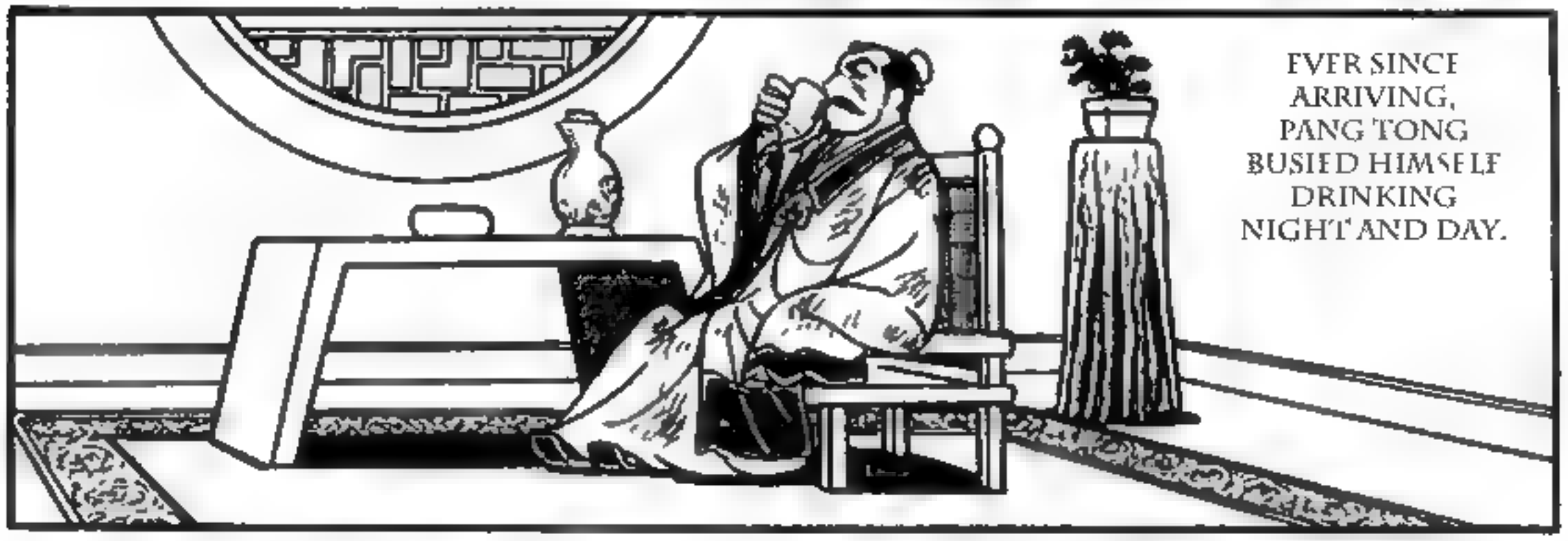
THANK YOU.

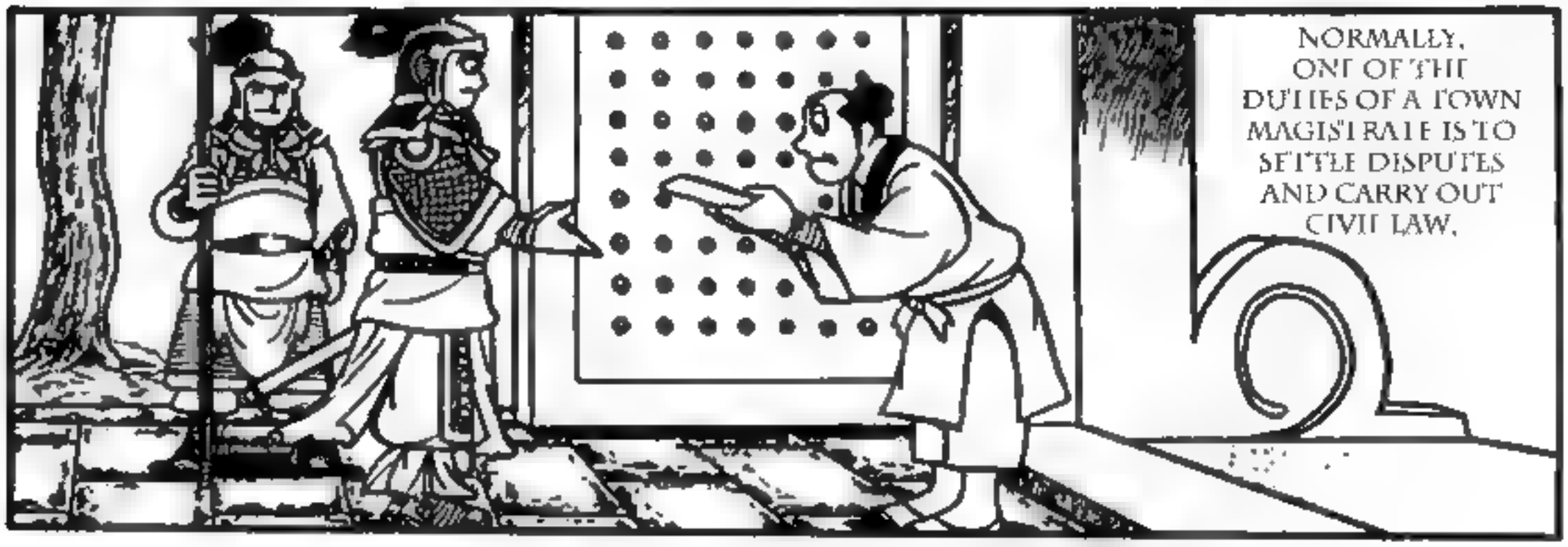
HERE IS YOUR SEAL OF OFFICE.

THEN YOU'LL TAKE IT?

PANG TONG LEFT AS QUICKLY AS HE HAD COME


THE VILLAGE THAT PANG TONG WAS NOW MAGISTRATE OF WAS LEIYANG IT WAS A SMALL VILLAGE OUT IN THE REMOTE COUNTRYSIDE


EVER SINCE ARRIVING, PANG TONG BUSIED HIMSELF DRINKING NIGHT AND DAY.


NORMALLY, ONE OF THE DUTIES OF A TOWN MAGISTRATE IS TO SETTLE DISPUTES AND CARRY OUT CIVIL LAW.

NATURALLY, THE VILLAGERS DECIDED THEY HAD ENOUGH AND FILED A COMPLAINT

BUT BECAUSE PANG TONG WAS BUSY DRINKING, THE STACK OF CASES HE HAD TO HANDLE PILED HIGHER AND HIGHER DAY BY DAY

WORD OF THIS NEWS EVENTUALLY REACHED LIU BEI'S EARS

HOW COULD A SCHOLAR BE SO LAZY...?

YES, SIR.

HE'S *THAT* BAD?

ZHANG FEI!
SUN QIAN!

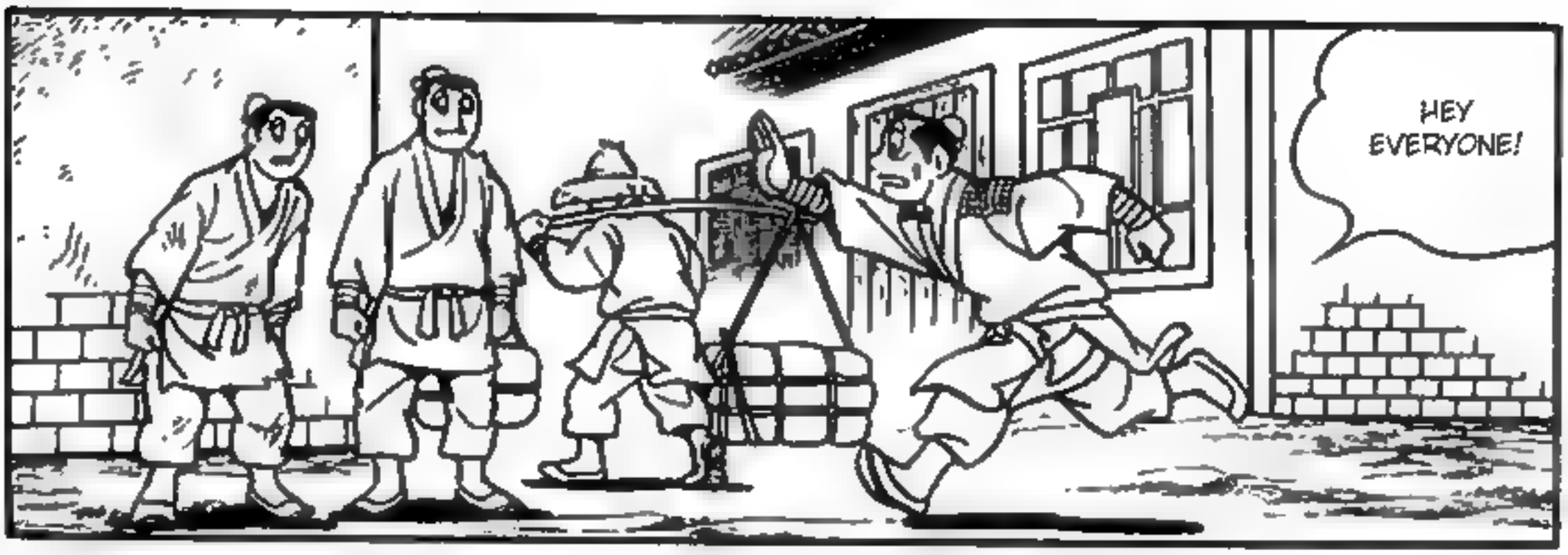
YES?

YES?

YES, OF COURSE.

I WANT YOU TO GO TO LEIYANG AND SEE IF THESE RUMOURS ABOUT PANG TONG'S INCOMPETENCE ARE TRUE.

AND SO ZHANG FEI
AND SUN QIAN
IMMEDIATELY
LEFT FOR LIYANG


HEY EVERYONE!

SOMEONE WILL FINALLY LISTEN TO OUR COMPLAINTS!?

C'MON, GUYS! LET'S GIVE THEM A GRAND WELCOME!

INSPECTORS HAVE COME FROM JINGZHOU!

THANK YOU FOR COMING OUT TO WELCOME US.

GREETINGS, SIRS. WE'VE BEEN AWAITING YOUR ARRIVAL.

THAT WOULD BE US, SIR.

WHY ISN'T THERE ANYONE FROM THE LOCAL OFFICE HERE TO GREET US?

WELL, LMM...

NO, I MEAN WHERE IS THE MAGISTRATE HIMSELF?

JUST TELL US THE TRUTH. WE HAVE NOT COME HERE TO PUNISH YOU.

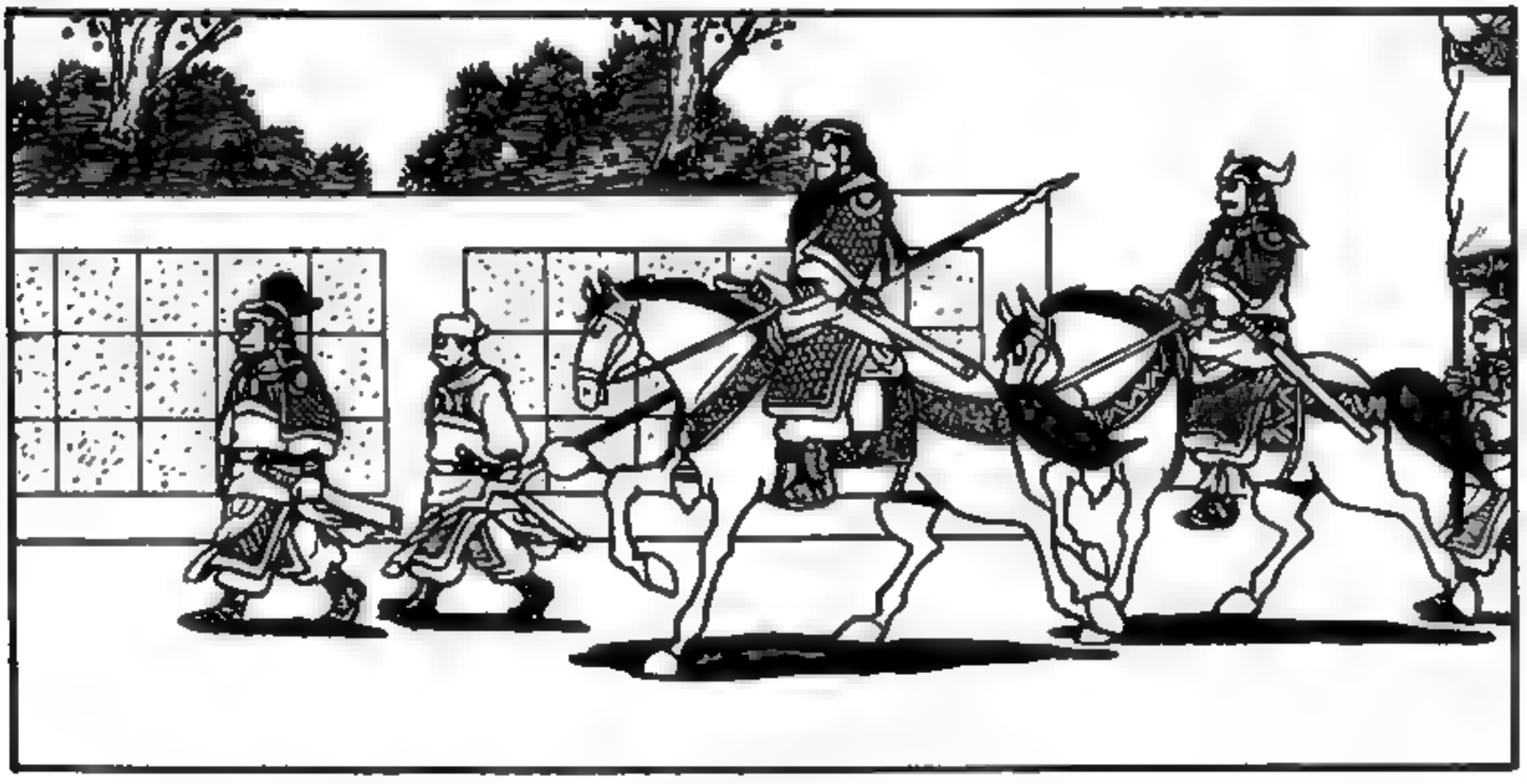
THEN WHAT DOES HE DO EVERY DAY!?

EVER SINCE COMING HERE, OUR MAGISTRATE HAS DISREGARDED ALL HIS DUTIES...

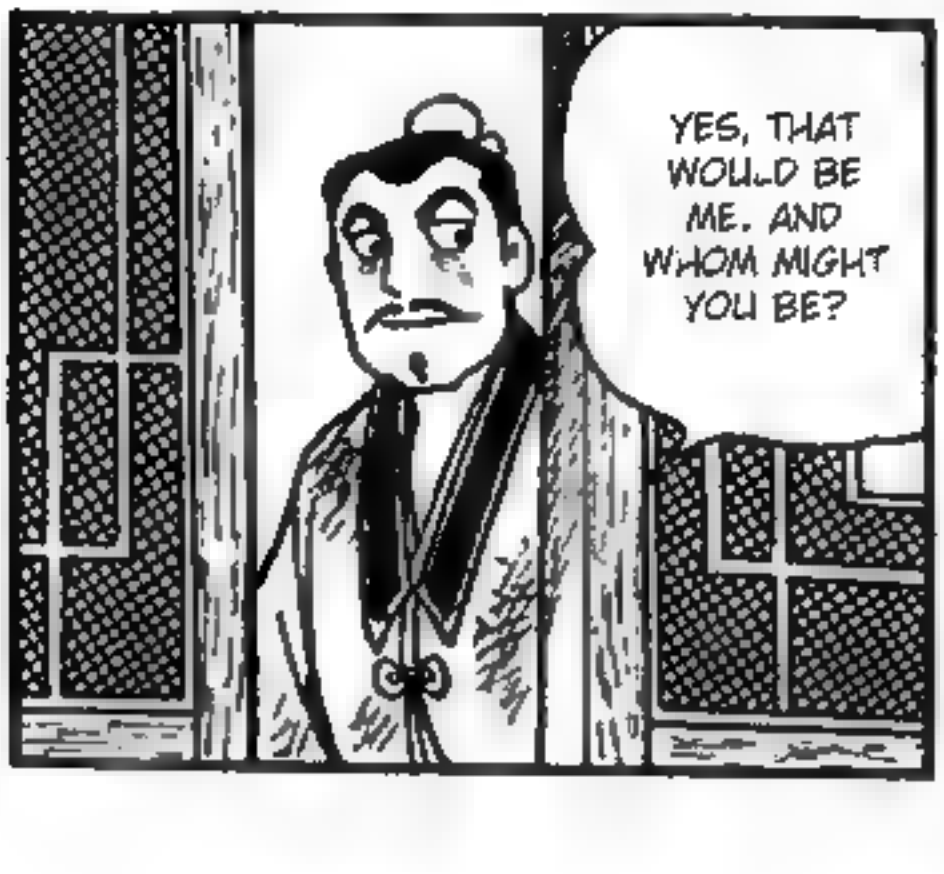
YOU MEAN TO SAY HE'S BUSY BEING DRUNK ALL DAY EVERY DAY!?

HE, UMM... DRINKS...

YES, SIR.
LEAD ME TO THE MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE AT ONCE!



THANK YOU.
THIS IS THE PLACE, SIR.


YES, THAT WOULD BE ME. AND WHOM MIGHT YOU BE?

ARE YOU THERE, PANG TONG?

PLEASE. COME IN, COME IN.

I AM ZHANG FEI.

AHH, SO YOU'RE THE FAMOUS ZHANG FEI!

I HEAR YOU'RE QUITE FOND OF DRINKS SO WHY DON'T WE SHARE A GLASS TOGETHER?

OH, NOT THIRSTY?

I DID NOT COME HERE TO DRINK, I CAME HERE TO SEE IF YOU'RE DOING YOUR JOB!

OH, YOU MEAN THOSE PETTY LITTLE LAWSUITS? NO WORRIES, I WAS PLANNING TO GET TO THEM EVENTUALLY.

I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN NEGLECTING YOUR DUTIES ENTIRELY.

OH PLEASE. I CAN TAKE CARE OF THOSE TRIVIAL THINGS IN A SINGLE DAY IF I FELT LIKE IT. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO LET THE MATTER SIT FOR SOME TIME TO ALLOW BOTH PARTIES OF A LAWSUIT TO CALM DOWN EMOTIONALLY.

LITTLE!? THE PILE OF LAWSUITS LYING ON YOUR DESK IS HARDLY WHAT I'D CALL *LITTLE!*

ALL THE BETTER TO DRINK FINE WINE WITH, M'DEAR.

THAT'S SOME MOUTH YOU HAVE!

SINCE YOU BOASTED THAT MUCH, LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN WALK THE WALK TOMORROW!

ENOUGH ABOUT YOUR WINE!

JUST LET ME ENJOY MY DRINK FOR NOW.

SURE, SURE, WHATEVER YOU SAY.

IF YOU CAN SETTLE ALL THE LITIGATIONS TOMORROW, THEN FINE. IF NOT, I'LL HAVE YOU FIRED AS WELL AS PUNISHED FOR GROSS INCOMPETENCE!

FINE, I WON'T SAY ANY MORE UNTIL TOMORROW.

YAWWN

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YES, QUITE WELL, IN FACT.
DID YOU SLEEP WELL, ZHANG FEI?

TIME TO REVEAL HIM FOR WHAT HE REALLY IS.

YES.

THEN SHALL WE GO SEE IF THE BRAGGART CAN PROVE HIS METTLE?

HMM?

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

THE MAGISTRATE DECIDED TO OPEN COURT FOR SOME REASON TODAY AND IS BUSY RESOLVING CASES RIGHT NOW.

THUS, THE FAULT LIES CLEARY WITH YOU. AS COMPENSATION, I HEREBY ORDER YOU TO PAY A FEE OF...

NEXT... YOUR CRIME IS TO BE PUNISHED BY FLOGGING.

PLEASE MAKE UP BY SUCH AND SUCH.

YES, SIR.

NEXT... DISPUTE IN THE YAN FAMILY... FAMILY MEMBERS SHOULD BE HELPING EACH OTHER, NOT ARGUING OVER PETTY MATTERS SUCH AS THIS.

NOT ONLY THAT, NONE OF THE PEOPLE HERE SHOW THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF DISSATISFACTION. IT SEEMS NO ONE HAS A COMPLAINT WITH ANY OF HIS RULINGS.

WHAT A FAIR AND RATIONAL DECISION!

CASE BY CASE PANG TONG RESOLVED EACH EFFECTIVELY AND FAIRLY.

AND BY SUNSET, HE HAD GONE THROUGH ALL THE LAWSUITS THAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT BEFORE HIM

SATISFIED, GENERAL ZHANG FEI?

NO, NO, IT'S FINE. I'M JUST GLAD I WON'T BE PUNISHED.

PLEASE FORGIVE MY RUDENESS YESTERDAY.

YES, I MUST ADMIT I'VE NEVER SEEN ANOTHER MAN WITH A MIND AS QUICK-WITTED AND LOGICAL AS YOU, MASTER PANG TONG.

AH, BY THE WAY, COULD YOU PASS THIS LETTER TO YOUR LORD?

YES, OF COURSE.

IT'S A LITTLE SOMETHING MY FRIEND KONGMING WROTE FOR MY SAKE.

YES, A MAN OF HIS TALENTS IS A RARE SIGHT IN OUR WORLD.

HE WENT THROUGH ALL THE LAWSUITS IN A SINGLE DAY? AND NOBODY OBJECTED TO ANY OF HIS RULINGS?

WHAT!?

ALSO, HE ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU THIS LETTER FROM KONGMING.

I ALMOST LOST AN IRREPLACEABLE GENIUS DUE TO MY OWN FOOLISH PREJUDICES.

PANG TONG IS NOT A MAN WHO SHOULD HAVE HIS TALENTS ROT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE AS A MERE MAGISTRATE OR SOME OTHER INSIGNIFICANT POST. HIS SKILLS WILL ONLY SHINE IN POSTS SUCH AS GOVERNOR OR HIGHER. SO I ASK MY LORD NOT TO JUDGE HIM BY APPEARANCES ALONE. TO NOT RECOGNIZE HIS TRUE VALUE AND HAVE HIM SNATCHED AWAY BY SOME OTHER LORD COULD VERY WELL BE THE GREATEST MISTAKE YOU CAN MAKE.

OH, GOOD.

MY LORD, ZHUGE LIANG HAS JUST RETURNED.

I'VE JUST FINISHED MY INSPECTION OF THE 4 COM-MANDERIES.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK, KONGMING.

Y... YES, HE DID... UNFORTUNATELY, I MISTAKENLY APPOINTED HIM AS THE MAGISTRATE OF LEIYANG BECAUSE THERE WERE NO POSTS EMPTY IN JINGZHOU.

BY THE WAY, HAS PANG TONG COME TO VISIT MY LORD YET?

LEIYANG? HAHA, IF YOU SEND A GENIUS LIKE PANG TONG OUT TO A SMALL RURAL VILLAGE, I'M SURE HE'LL DO NOTHING BUT DRINK EVERY DAY OUT OF BOREDOM.

DID HE NOT SHOW YOU THE LETTER OF REC-OMMENDATION I WROTE?

E-EXACTLY! HE DID JUST THAT!

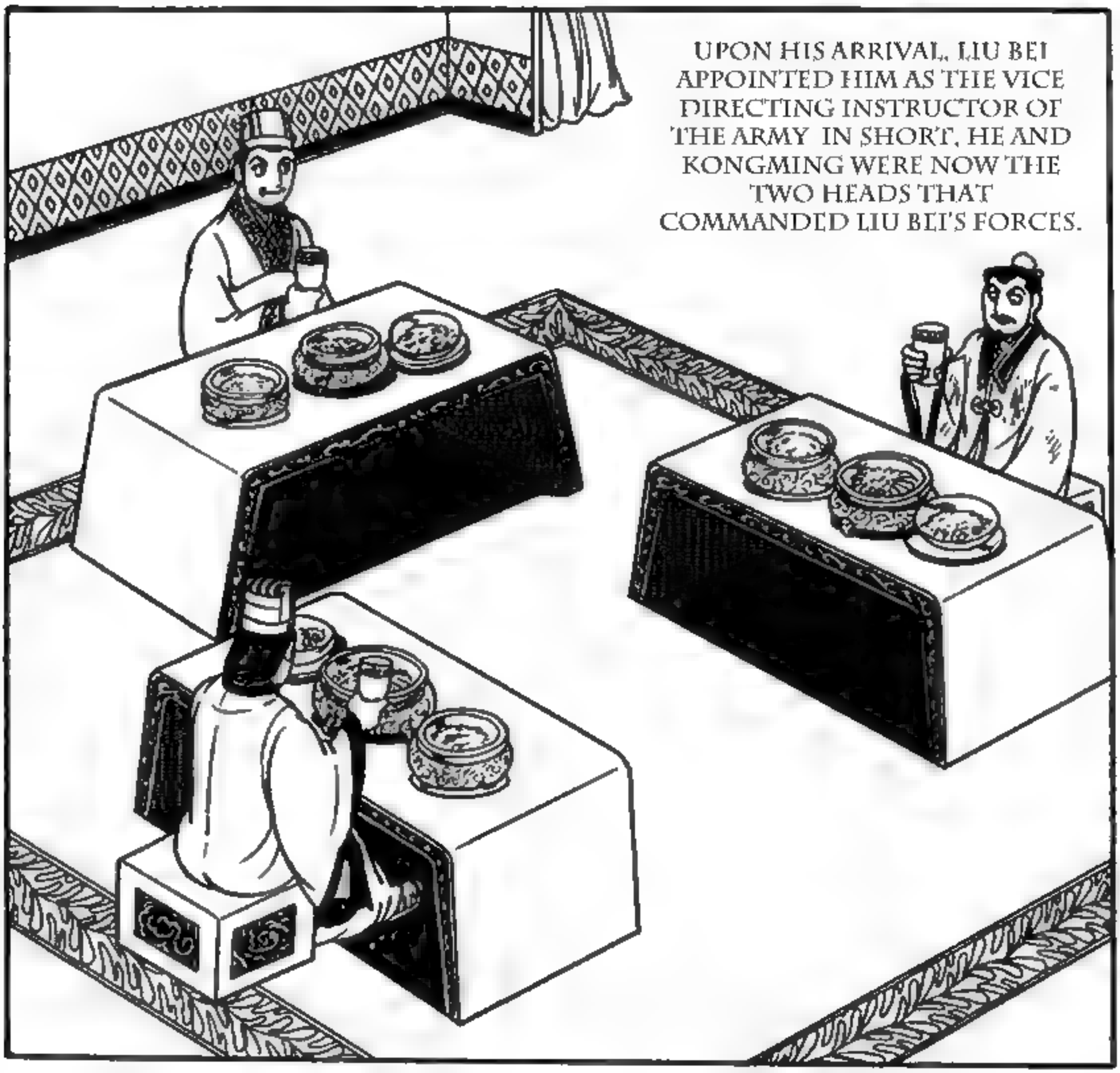
WELL, PLEASE CALL HIM HERE IMMEDIATELY AND FIND A REPLACEMENT FOR LEIYANG'S MAGISTRATE.

HE ONLY GAVE IT TO ME JUST NOW! IF I HAD READ THIS EARLIER, I WOULD NEVER DARE TO TREAT HIM THE WAY I SHAMEFULLY DID.

YES, SIR.

PLEASE CALL PANG TONG TO JINGZHOU AT ONCE.

PANG TONG QUICKLY RETURNED TO JINGZHOU.

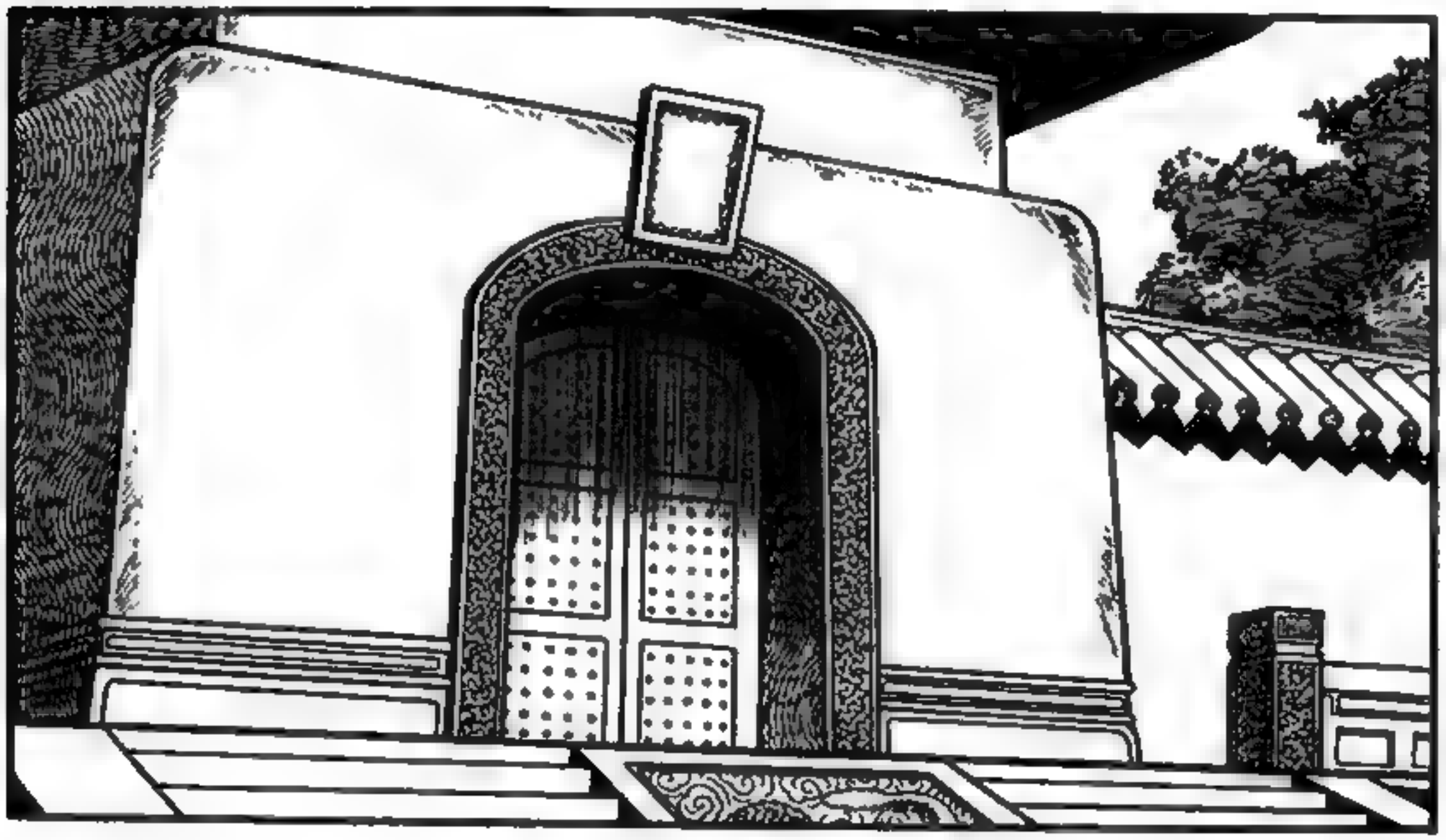

UPON HIS ARRIVAL, LIU BEI APPOINTED HIM AS THE VICE DIRECTING INSTRUCTOR OF THE ARMY. IN SHORT, HE AND KONGMING WERE NOW THE TWO HEADS THAT COMMANDED LIU BEI'S FORCES.

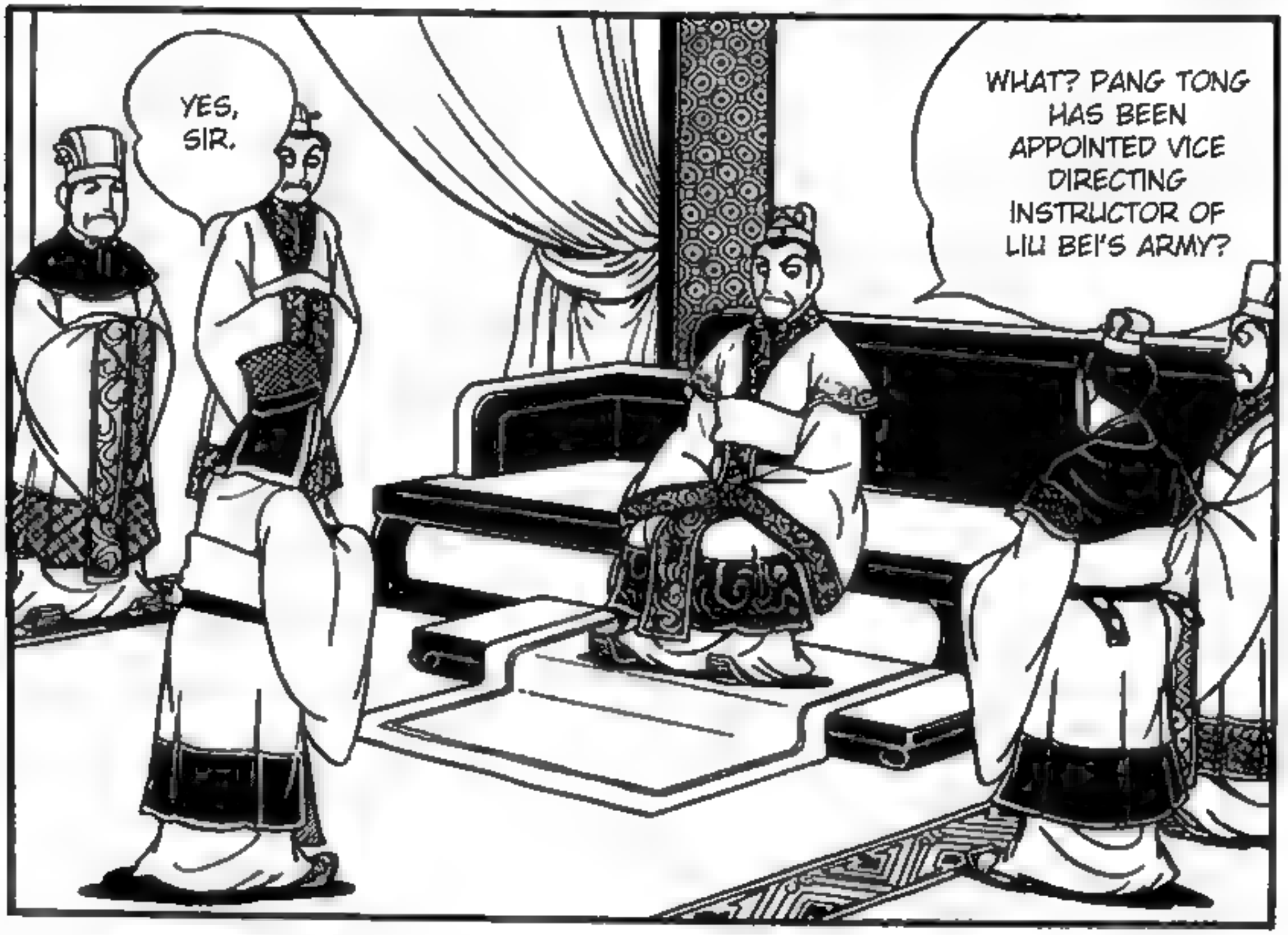
SLEEPING DRAGON OR THE YOUNG PHOENIX... EVEN OBTAINING ONE OF THEM WOULD BE ENOUGH TO RESTORE ORDER TO THE EMPIRE...

DURING A PRIVATE DINNER BETWEEN THE THREE, LIU BEI RECALLED WHAT MASTER SHUI JING ONCE SAID

TRULY, HOW THE FORTUNES SMILE IN MY FAVOUR... BUT I MUST NOW BE MORE CAREFUL THAN EVER AS TO NOT WASTE THIS OPPORTUNITY...

TO THINK THAT A MAN AS FOOLISH AS MYSELF CAN OBTAIN THE SERVICES OF BOTH THESE GENIUSES...




YES, SIR.
WHAT? PANG TONG HAS BEEN APPOINTED VICE DIRECTING INSTRUCTOR OF LIU BEI'S ARMY?

LIU BEI ALREADY HAS GUAN YU, ZHANG FEI, ZHAO YUN, AND ZHUGE LIANG. BUT WITH PANG TONG ON TOP OF THAT, HE TRULY HAS BOTH THE DRAGON AND PHOENIX SUPPORTING HIM.

THIS IS NO TRIVIAL MATTER, SIR.

BUT THE PROBLEM IS THE ONGOING ALLIANCE BETWEEN LIU BEI AND SUN QUAN. IF I WERE TO ATTACK, WHOM DO YOU RECOMMEND I TARGET FIRST?

AGREED. I CANNOT JUST SIT BY AND DO NOTHING.

IF WE GIVE HIM TIME TO STORE GRAIN AND TRAIN TROOPS, HE'LL SURELY BECOME OUR GREATEST THREAT.

YES, GOOD POINT...

WU, OF COURSE. AFTER ALL, THEY RECENTLY LOST THEIR COMMANDER, ZHOU YU.

EVEN DURING OUR LAST SOUTHERN CAMPAIGN, THERE WERE RUMOURS THAT MA TENG WAS LEADING AN ARMY TO THE CAPITAL. THOUGH IT DID NOT ACTUALLY COME TO PASS, I MUST PRECLUDE SUCH A POSSIBILITY FOR THE FUTURE.

HOWEVER, MY REAL CONCERN IN LAUNCHING ANOTHER CAMPAIGN IS THE THREAT FROM XILIANG.* IF I LEAVE XUCHANG FOR TOO LONG, MA TENG MIGHT ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE CAPITAL...

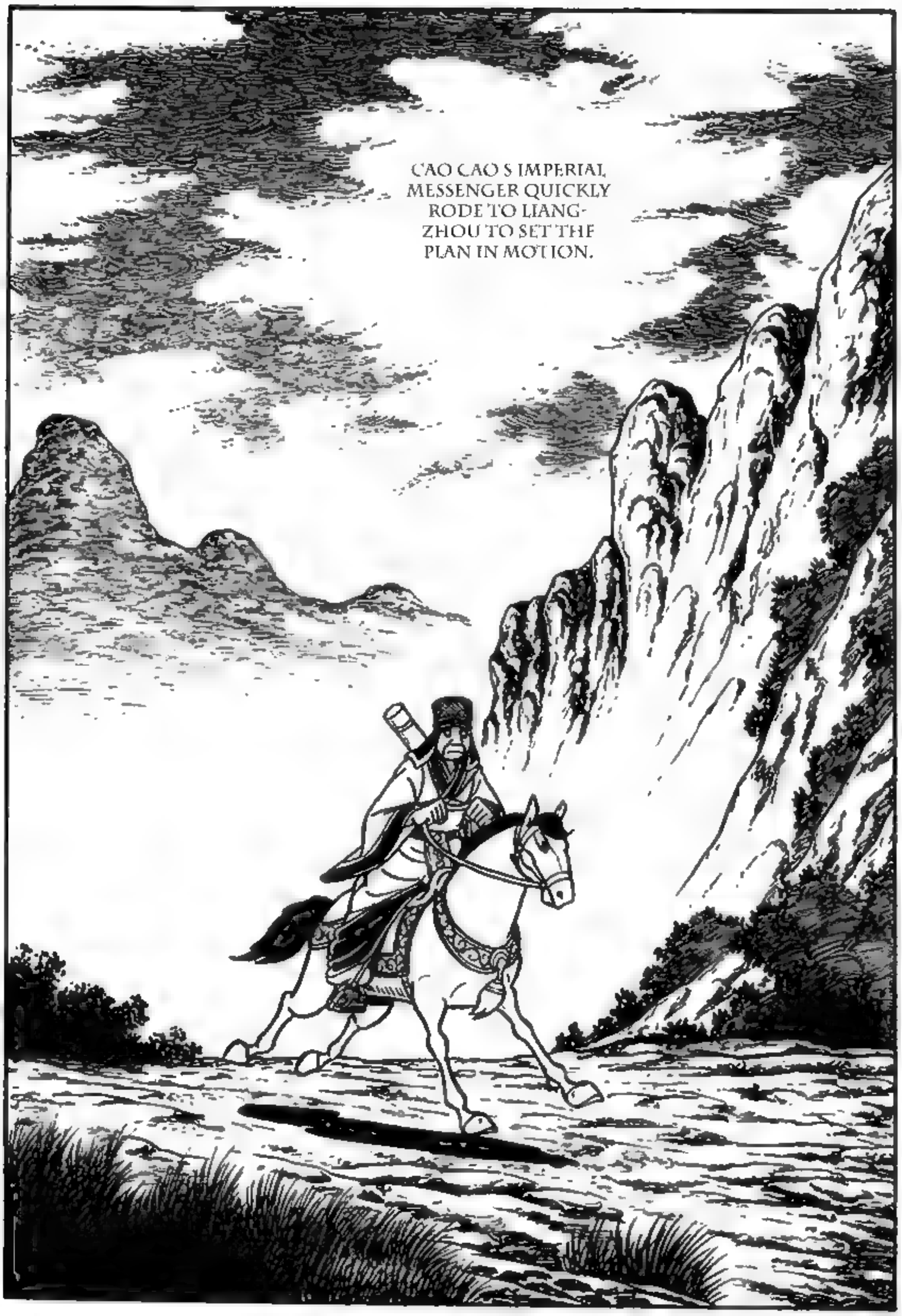
*AN ALTERNATE NAME FOR THE PROVINCE CALLED LIANGZHOU IN HAN DYNASTY TIMES

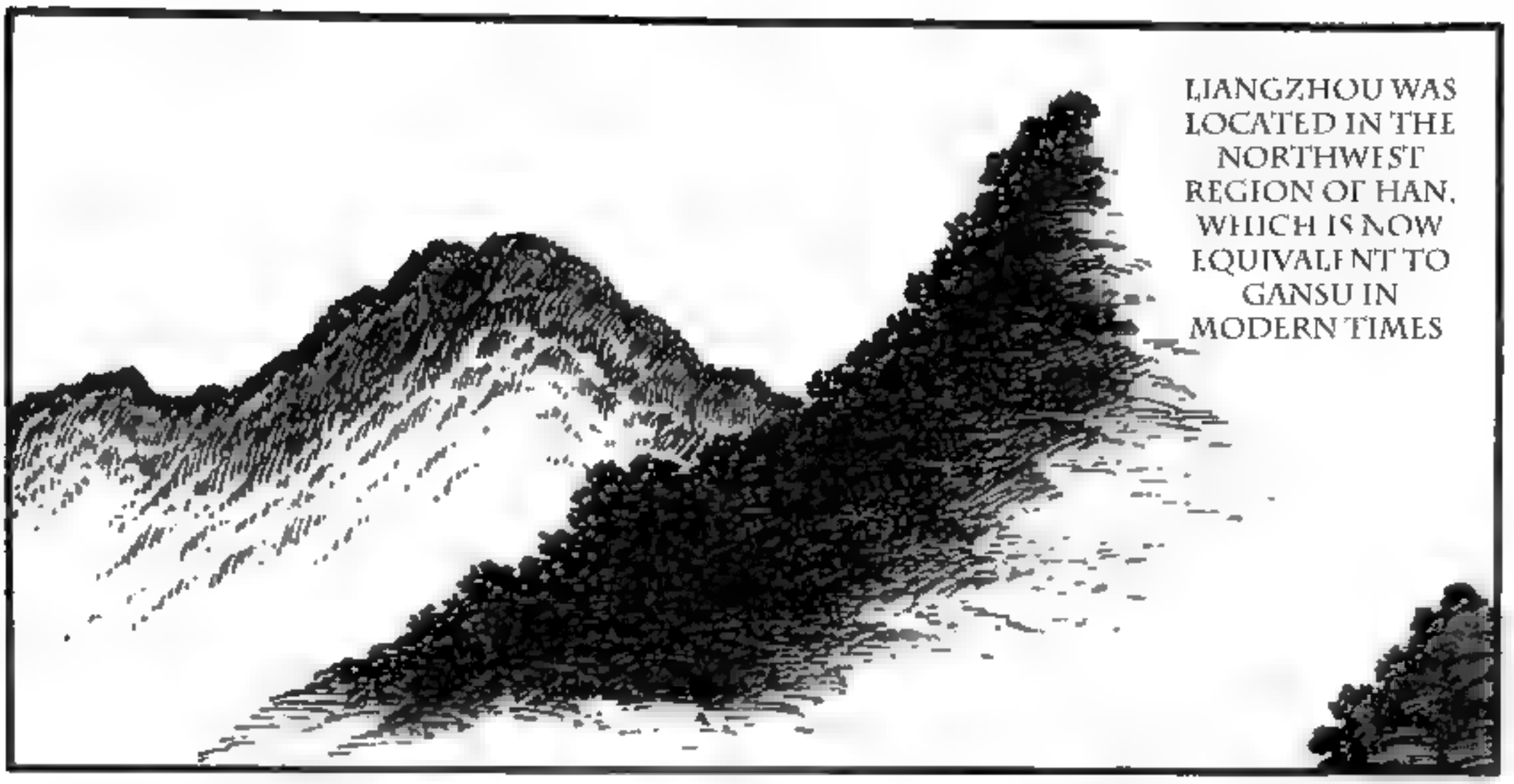
THEN HOW ABOUT THIS? YOU SUMMON MA TENG TO THE CAPITAL UNDER THE PRETENSE OF APPOINTING HIM TO LEAD THE ATTACK ON THE SOUTHLANDS. THERE WILL BE NUMEROUS WAYS TO "DISPOSE" OF HIM ONCE HE COMES HERE TO THE CAPITAL.

YES, SIR.

SUMMON MA TENG HERE AT ONCE THEN.

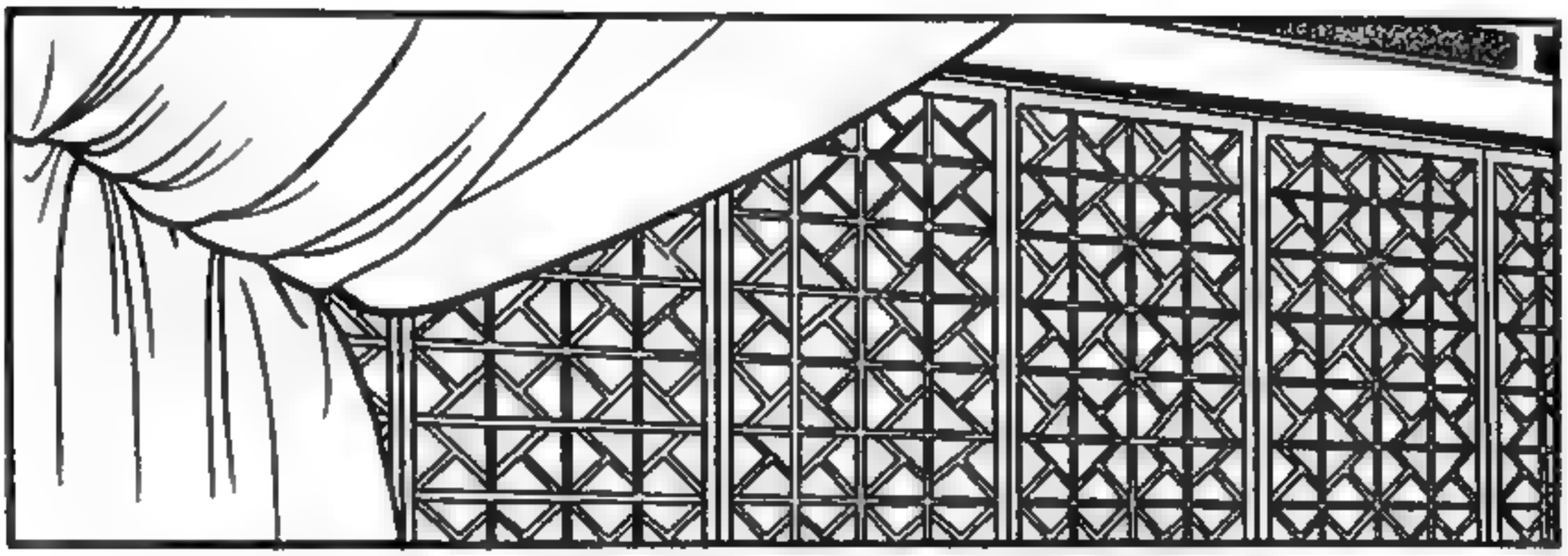
YES, THAT'S A SPLENDID IDEA!


CAO CAO S IMPERIAL
MESSENGER QUICKLY
RODE TO LIANG-
ZHOU TO SET THE
PLAN IN MOTION.


LIANGZHOU WAS LOCATED IN THE NORTHWEST REGION OF HAN, WHICH IS NOW EQUIVALENT TO GANSU IN MODERN TIMES

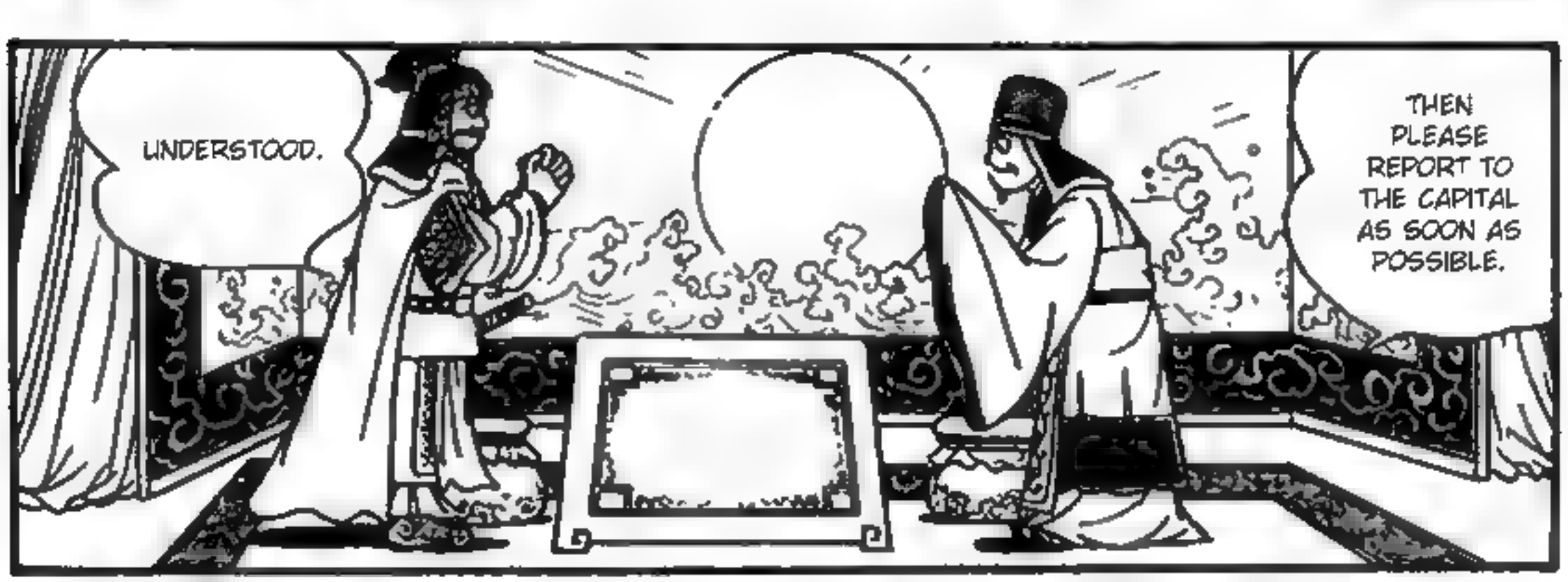
THOUGH NOT AS RICH OR AS CULTURED AS THE PROVINCES IN THE EMPIRE'S INTERIOR,

MANY OF ITS PEOPLE WERE A MIX OF HAN AND QIANG BLOOD, WHICH GAVE RISE TO FIERCE SOLDIERS RENOWNED FOR THEIR USE OF BOW, SPEAR, AND HORSE-BACK RIDING, SIMILAR TO THE WUHUAN PEOPLE IN THE NORTHEAST REGIONS

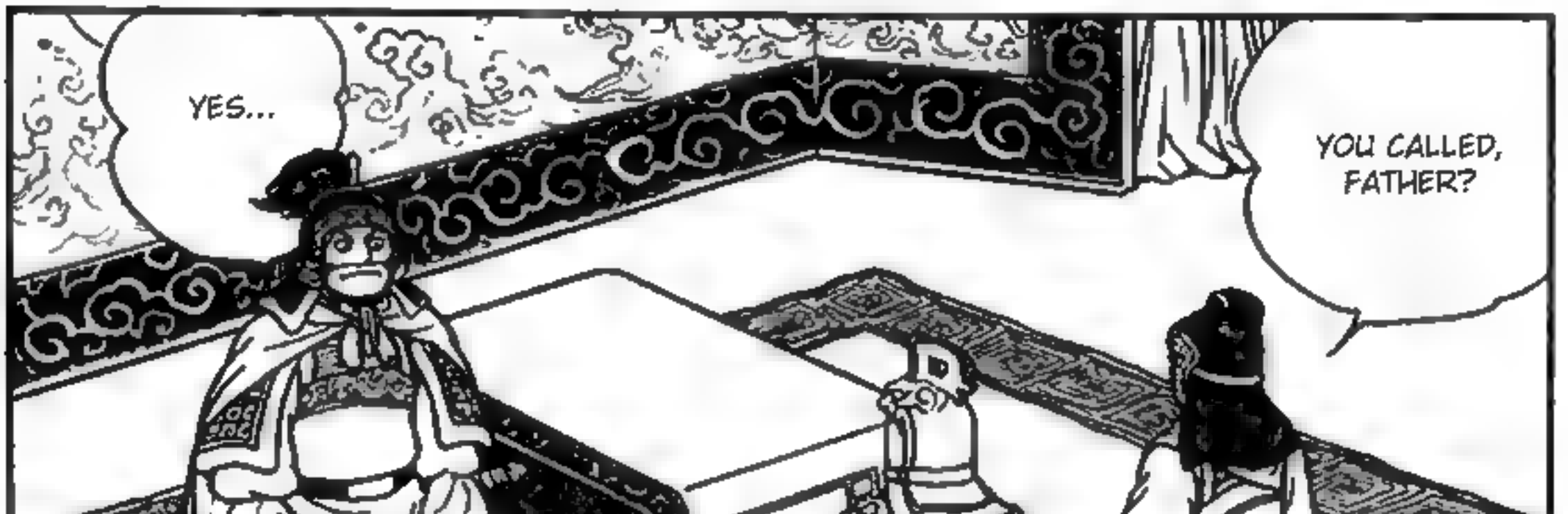


WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE, SIR?

WELL, I CAN'T JUST IGNORE AN IMPERIAL ORDER, CAN I NOW?


UNDERSTOOD.
THEN PLEASE REPORT TO THE CAPITAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

YES, SIR.
SUMMON ALL MY SONS RIGHT AWAY.


YES...
YOU CALLED, FATHER?

I'VE JUST RECEIVED AN IMPERIAL ORDER TO COME TO THE CAPITAL SO I CAN LEAD THE ATTACK ON SUN QUAN'S WU.

THOUGH THE PLOT WAS EVENTUALLY DISCOVERED AND DONG CHENG WAS EXECUTED, I NOW HEAR THAT LIU BEI HAS TAKEN JINGZHOU FOR HIMSELF, MAKING OUR PAST-MISSION NOW POSIBLE. BUT TO THINK I WOULD RECEIVE AN ORDER SUCH AS THIS NOW OF ALL TIMES...

TRUTH BE TOLD, LONG AGO, WHEN DONG CHENG RECEIVED A SECRET ORDER FROM THE EMPEROR TO ASSASSINATE CAO CAO, LIU BEI AND I SIGNED A PLEDGE IN OUR BLOOD SWEARING TO HELP DONG CHENG'S MISSION.

BUT OF COURSE, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THIS IS NOT THE WILL OF THE EMPEROR, BUT HIS CHANCELLOR CAO CAO INSTEAD.

BUT YOU WILL BE BRANDED AS A REBEL AND CALL UPON CAO CAO'S WRATH IF YOU OUTRIGHT REFUSE TO GO TO XUCHANG, FATHER.

HMM...

SO WHY DON'T YOU REPORT TO XUCHANG FOR THE TIME BEING WHERE IT WILL BE EASIER TO LOOK FOR A POSSIBLE CHANCE TO STRIKE DOWN CAO CAO ONCE AND FOR ALL INSTEAD?

I FOR ONE BELIEVE THE RIGHT CHOICE IS TO HAVE OUR ENTIRE ARMY ATTACK XUCHANG SO WE CAN REMOVE THE LEECH ONCE AND FOR ALL.

YES, GOOD POINT...

CAO CAO IS NOT TO BE UNDERESTIMATED, UNCLE TENG. SIMPLY REPORTING TO XUCHANG MAY END IN TRAGEDY.

HMM...

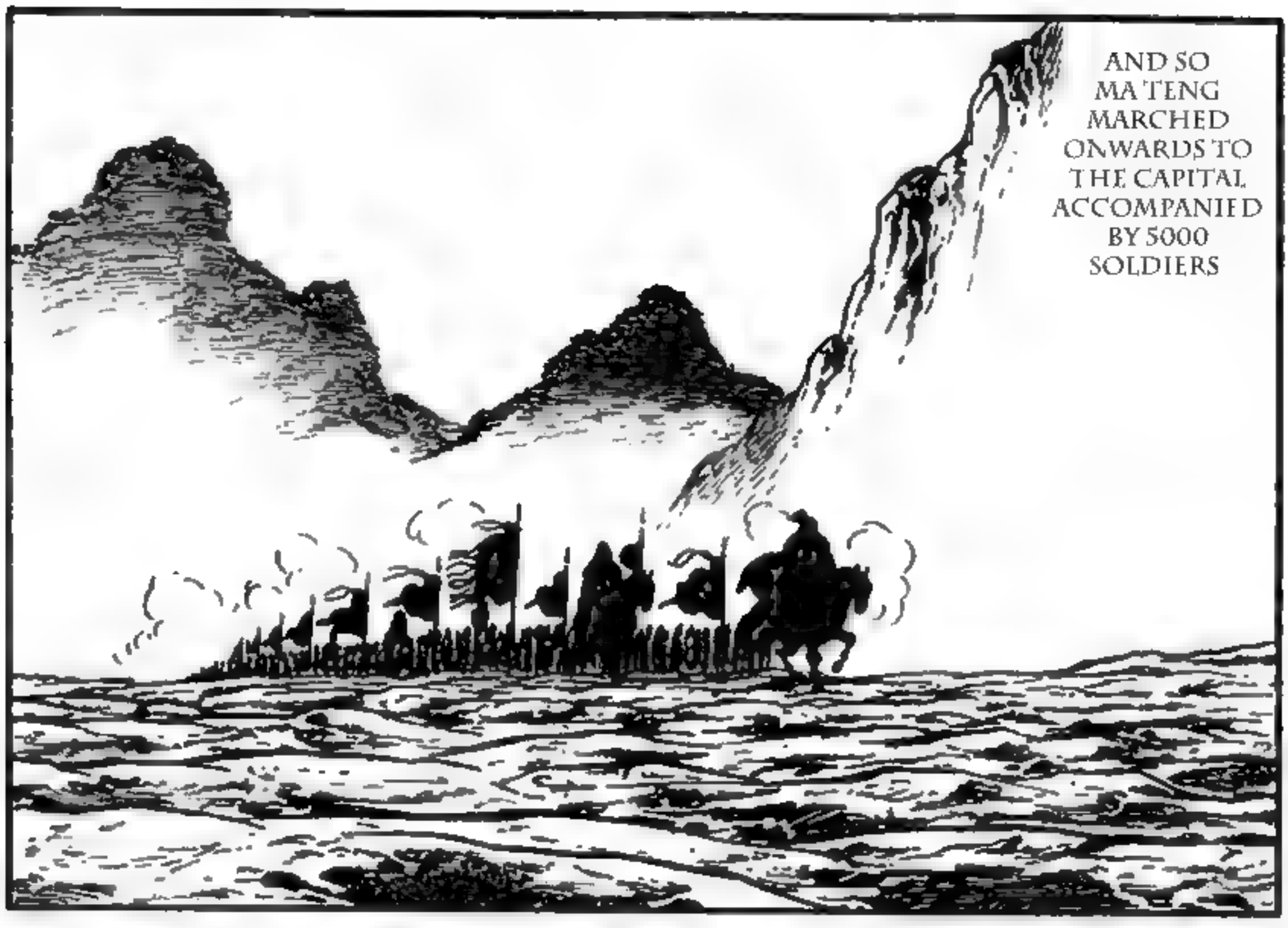
CHAO, AS MY ELDEST SON, YOU ARE TO STAY HERE AND GUARD LIANGZHOU.

I'VE MADE MY DECISION.

AS FOR XIU, TE, AND MY NEPHEW DAI, YOU THREE WILL ACCOMPANY ME TO XUCHANG.

WORRY NOT, MY SON. HAN SUI AND I ARE SWORN-BROTHERS AND WE COMMAND A STRONG ARMY. THUS, CAO CAO WILL HESITATE ON MAKING A MOVE AGAINST ME SINCE HE KNOWS THAT WILL CAUSE HAN SUI TO ATTACK.

FATHER, I WISH TO COME SERVE AT YOUR SIDE AS WELL!


AND SO MA TENG MARCHED ONWARDS TO THE CAPITAL ACCOMPANIED BY 5000 SOLDIERS

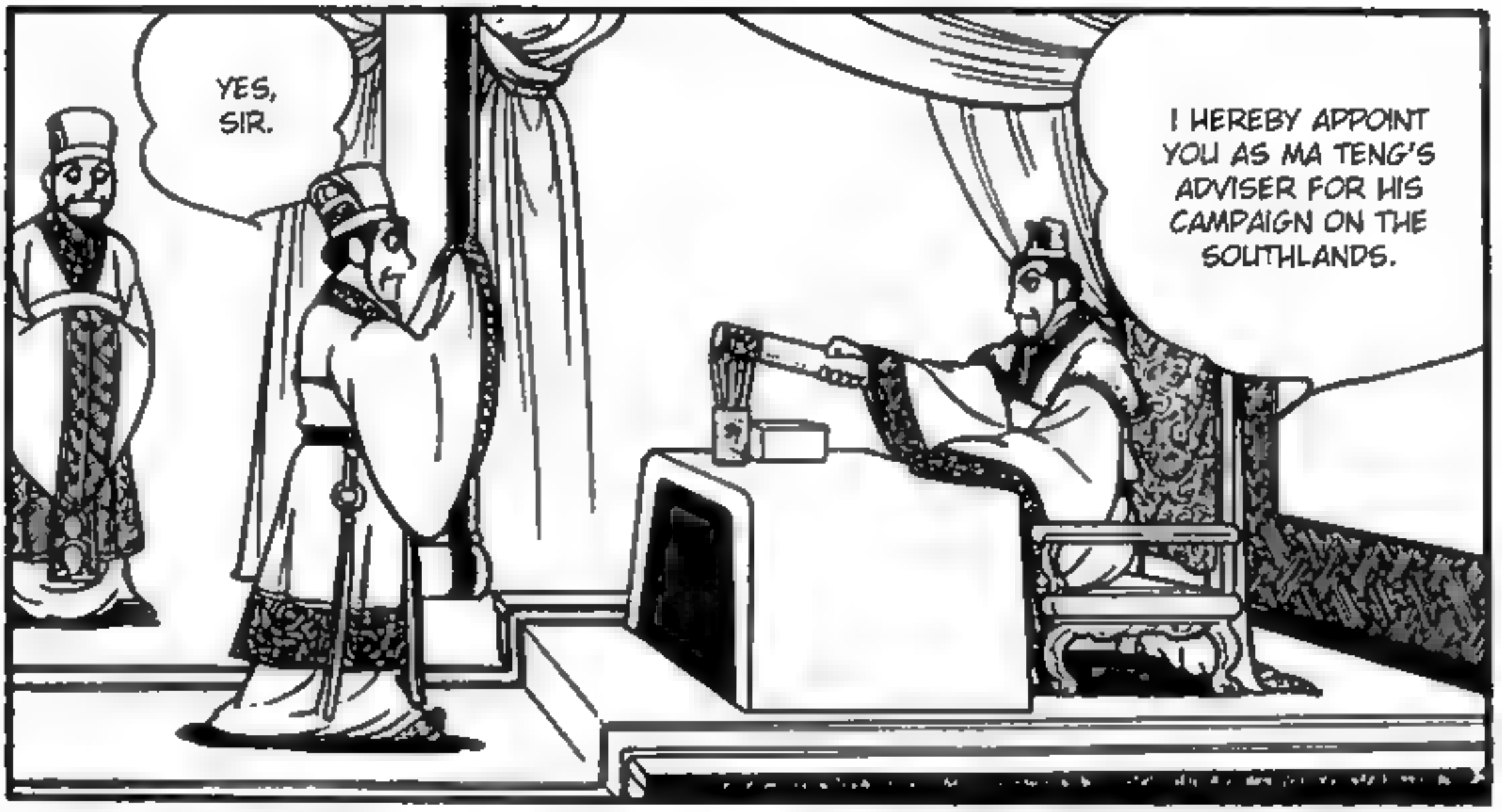
HIS SONS MA XIU AND MA TE LED THE VANGUARD.

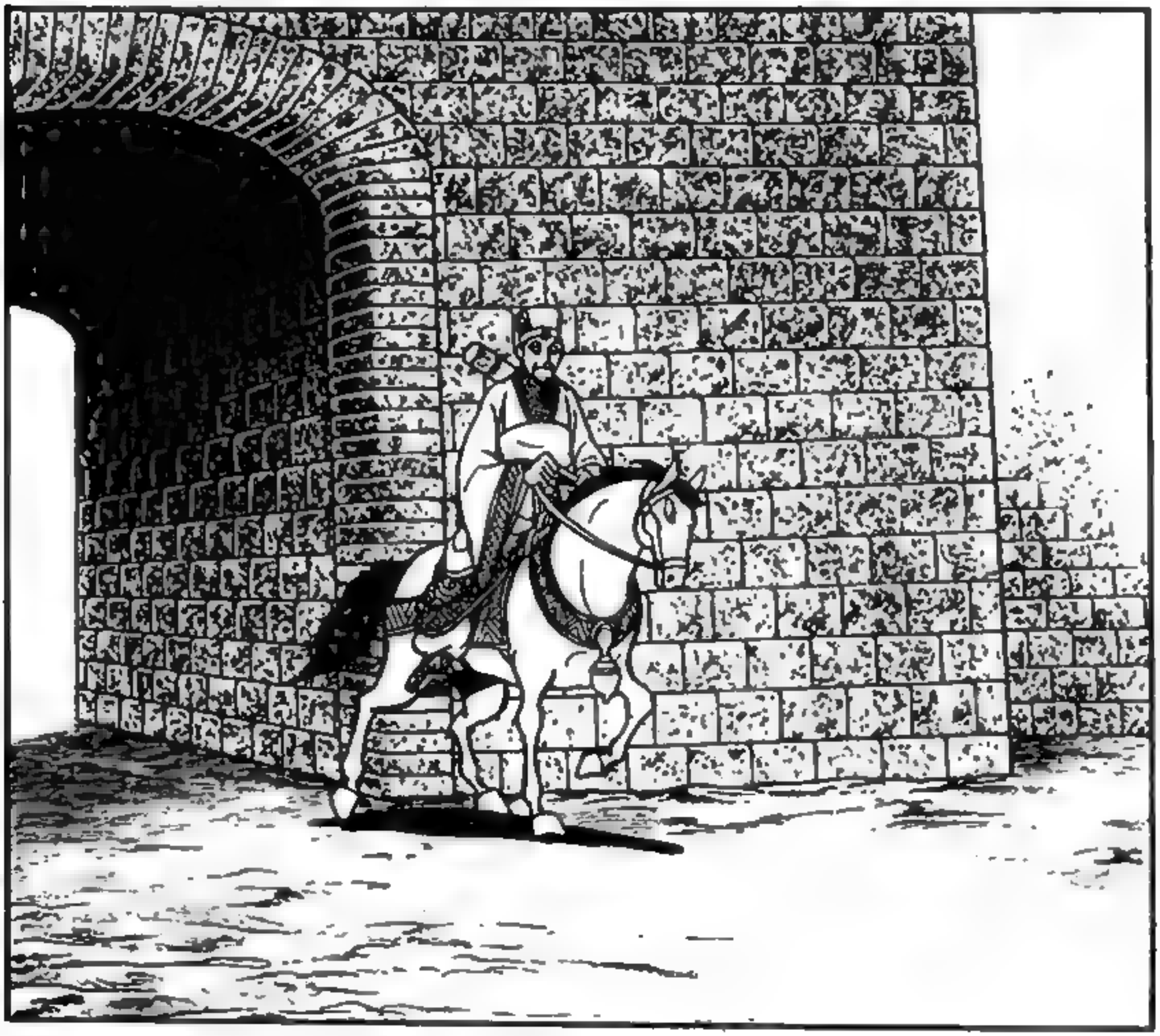
WHILE HIS NEPHEW MA DAI GUARDED THE REAR.

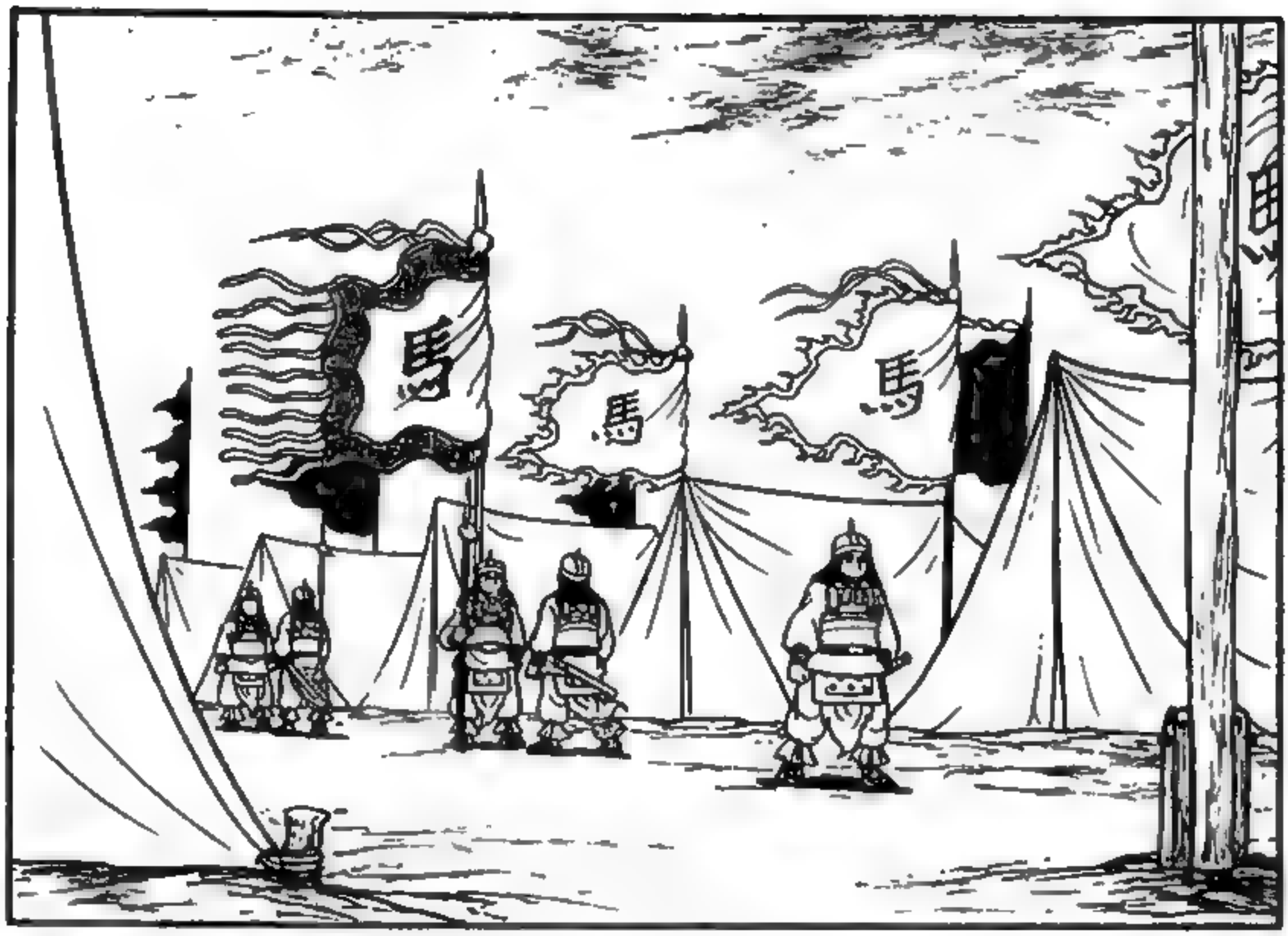
HUANG KUI!

YES?

YES, SIR.
MA TENG HAS ARRIVED AT THE CITY WALLS WITH HIS SOLDIERS?


YES, SIR.
I HEREBY APPOINT YOU AS MA TENG'S ADVISER FOR HIS CAMPAIGN ON THE SOUTHLANDS.

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I HAVE BEEN APPOINTED BY THE CHANCELLOR TO SERVE AS MA TENG'S CHIEF ADVISER FOR HIS ATTACK ON WU. PLEASE LEAD ME TO YOUR LORD.

PLEASE COME INSIDE SO WE CAN SHARE A DRINK.

AND I AM HUANG KUI, YOUR NEW CHIEF ADVISER.

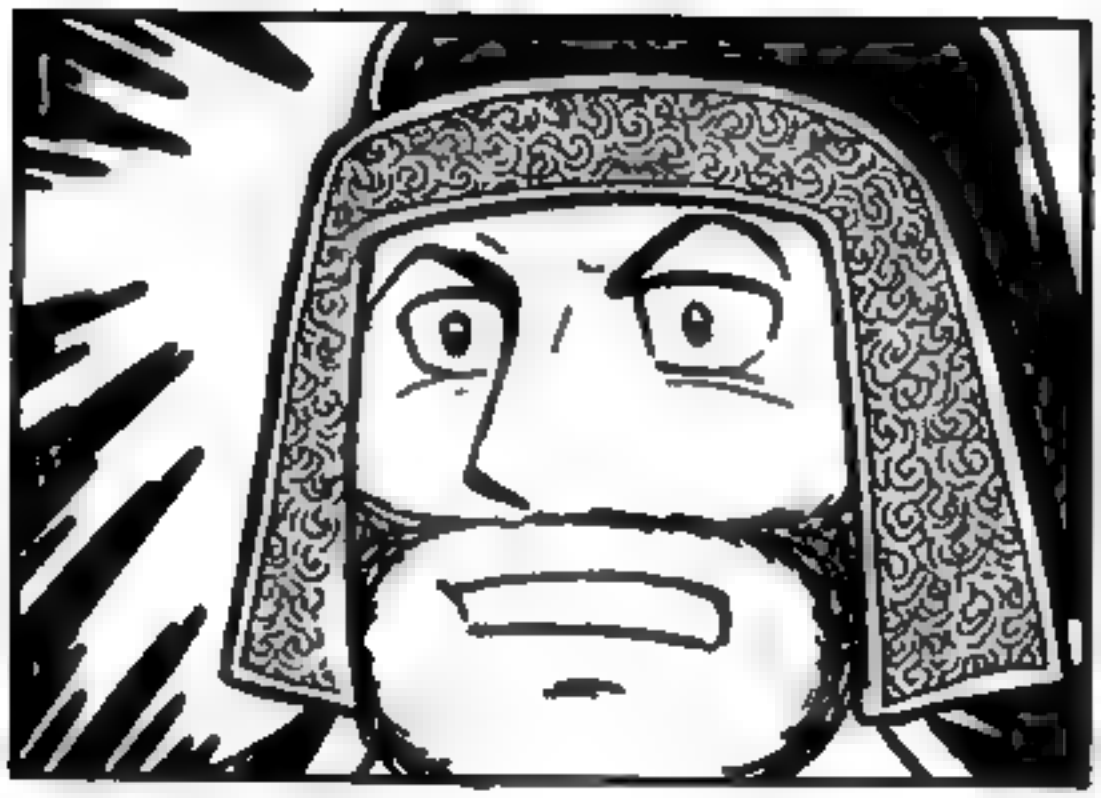
GREETINGS, SIR. I AM MA TENG.

OH, IT'S NOTHING. I'D DO ANYTHING TO FOLLOW THE EMPEROR'S ORDERS.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT IN MAKING THE LONG JOURNEY FROM LIANGZHOU TO XUCHANG.

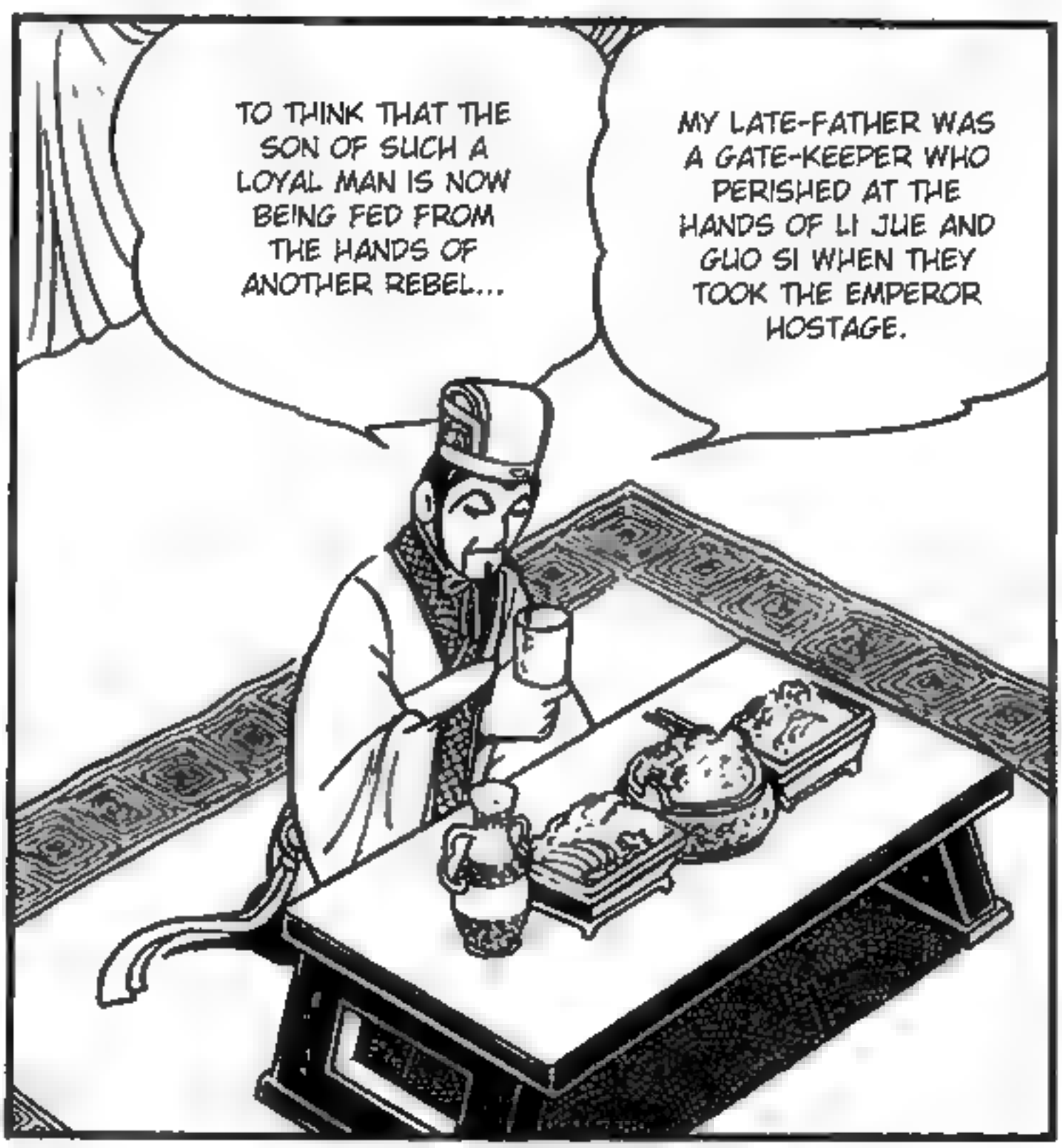
AH, IS THAT SO?

THE CHANCELLOR SAYS HE WILL GIVE YOU TROOPS AND SUPPLIES FOR THE SOUTHLAND CAMPAIGN ONCE YOU REPORT TO THE EMPEROR TOMORROW.



BUT INCIDENTALLY, WHOM DO YOU THINK IS THE REAL THREAT THAT SHOULD BE ELIMINATED FOR THE GOOD OF THE EMPIRE?

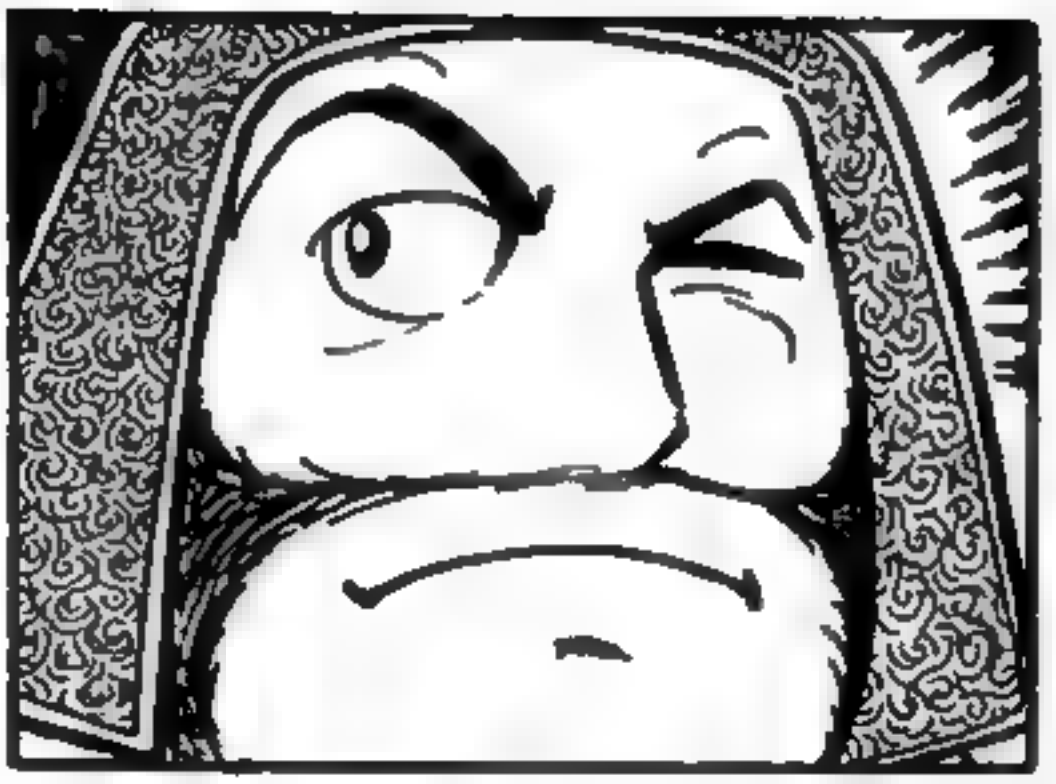
IT IS QUITE A PITY THAT YOU, WITH YOUR ELITE TROOPS AND A PROVINCE TO CALL YOUR OWN, REFUSE TO PLAY THE PART OF HERO IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES.

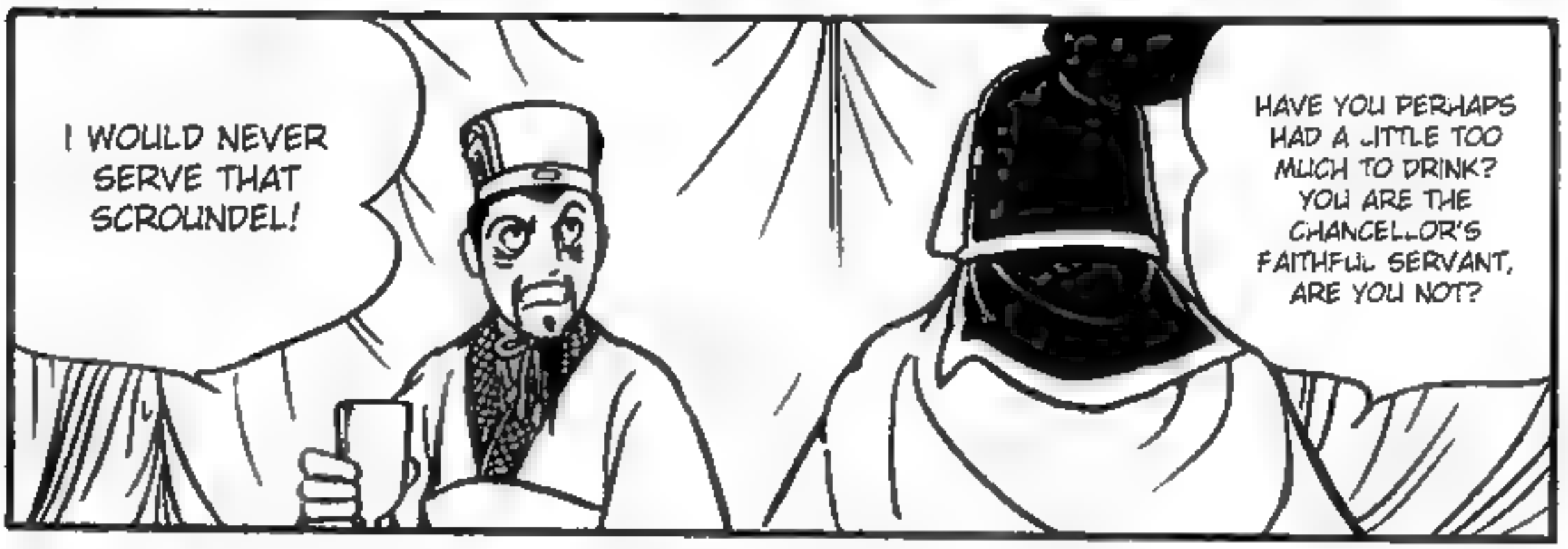

TO THINK THAT THE SON OF SUCH A LOYAL MAN IS NOW BEING FED FROM THE HANDS OF ANOTHER REBEL...
MY LATE-FATHER WAS A GATE-KEEPER WHO PERISHED AT THE HANDS OF LI JUE AND GUO SI WHEN THEY TOOK THE EMPEROR HOSTAGE.

CAO CAO! WHO ELSE!?

HAHA, I'M AFRAID YOU LOST ME, SIR. JUST WHO IS THIS REBEL YOU'RE TALKING OF?

HE MUST BE TESTING MY LOYALTIES ON BEHALF OF CAO CAO.

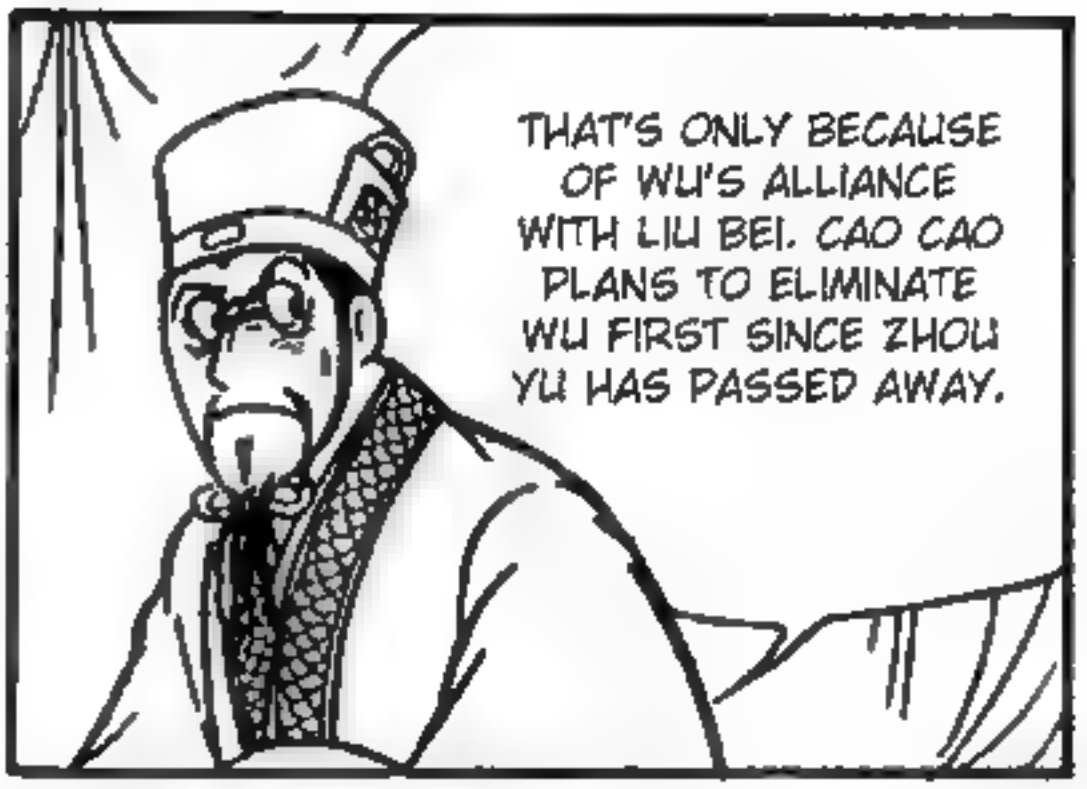


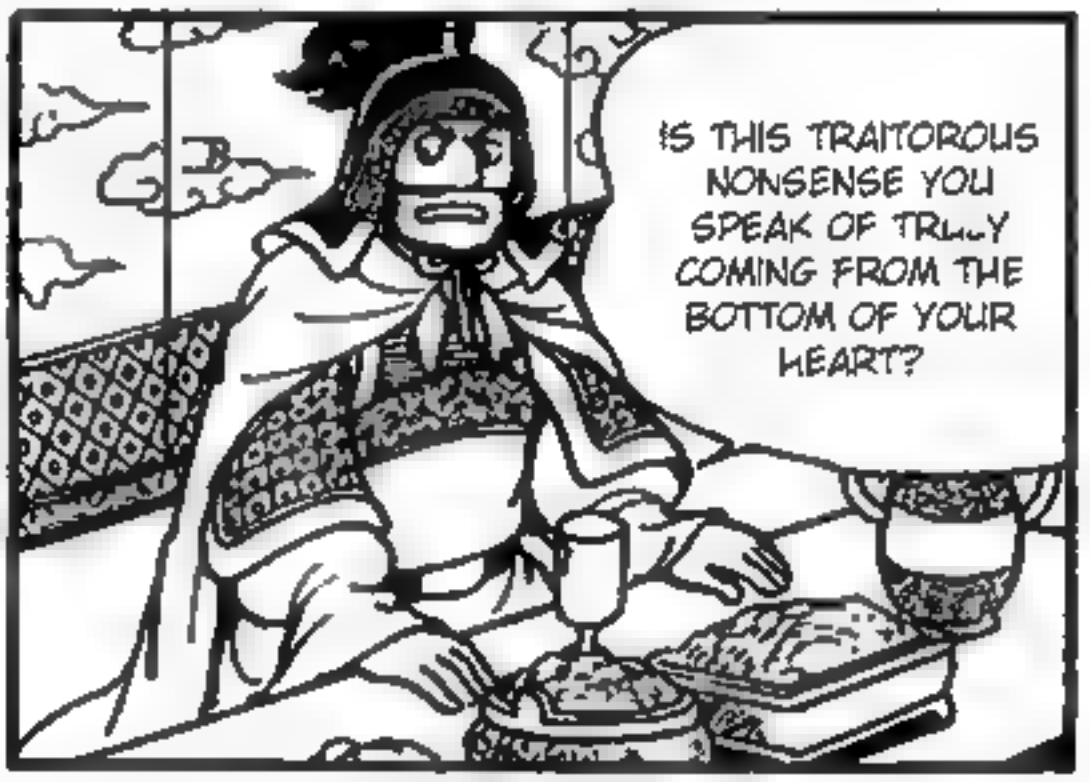

I WOULD NEVER SERVE THAT SCROUNDEL!
HAVE YOU PERHAPS HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK? YOU ARE THE CHANCELLOR'S FAITHFUL SERVANT, ARE YOU NOT?

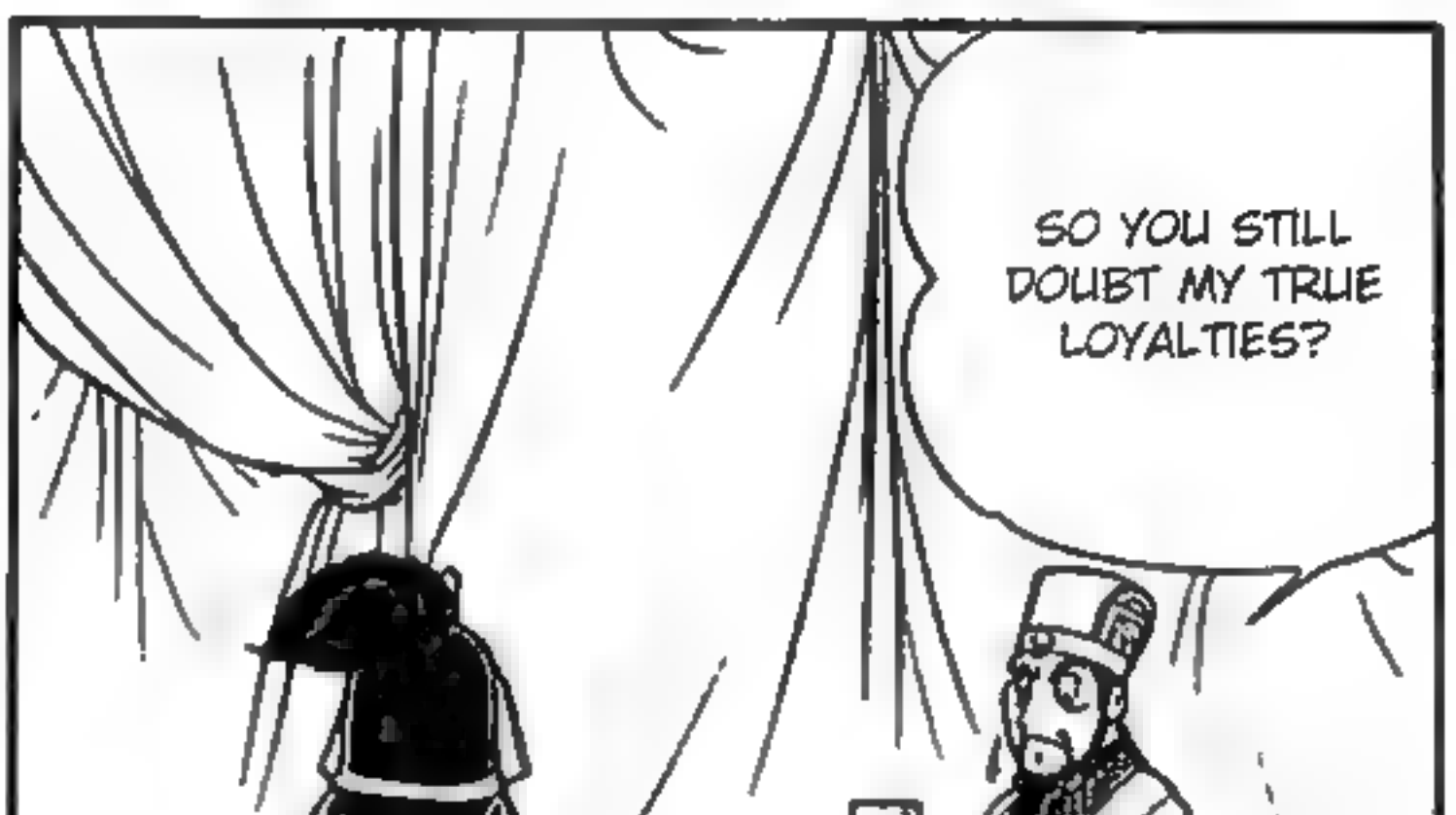
IS SUN QUAN'S WU NOT THE TARGET OF THE SOUTHLAND CAMPAIGN?

I AM LOYAL ONLY TO THE EMPEROR, LIKE MY FATHER BEFORE ME. YOU, AS THE DESCENDANT OF THE GREAT GENERAL MA YUAN WHO PACIFIED REBELLIONS ACROSS THE EMPIRE, SHOULD BE ASHAMED TO LEAD THE ATTACK AGAINST LIU BEI, WHO IS OF IMPERIAL BLOOD.

BUT HIS REAL OBJECTIVE IS TO KILL LIU BEI.


THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE OF WU'S ALLIANCE WITH LIU BEI. CAO CAO PLANS TO ELIMINATE WU FIRST SINCE ZHOU YU HAS PASSED AWAY.


IS THIS TRAITOROUS NONSENSE YOU SPEAK OF TRULY COMING FROM THE BOTTOM OF YOUR HEART?


SO YOU STILL DOUBT MY TRUE LOYALTIES?

THERE! I'LL GLADLY SIGN AN OATH IN BLOOD TO KILL CAO CAO OR WHATEVER YOU WISH!

MY APOLOGIES, HUANG KUI. I HAD TO HIDE MY TRUE LOYALTIES AS WELL FOR I WAS UNSURE WHETHER THIS WAS CAO CAO'S PLOT.

OHHH! SO THEN YOU-

IT IS A BLESSING THAT YOU HAVE BEEN APPOINTED AS MY CHIEF ADVISOR.

OHHH!

YES, I SEEK TO DESTROY CAO CAO AS SOON AS I SEE A SUITABLE CHANCE.

I SUSPECTED THAT WAS THE CASE BUT I WASN'T ENTIRELY SURE. IN ANY CASE, I'M OVERJOYED TO FIND ANOTHER ALLY.

WHY YES, I DO.

DO YOU HAVE ANY GOOD IDEAS ON HOW TO KILL CAO CAO?

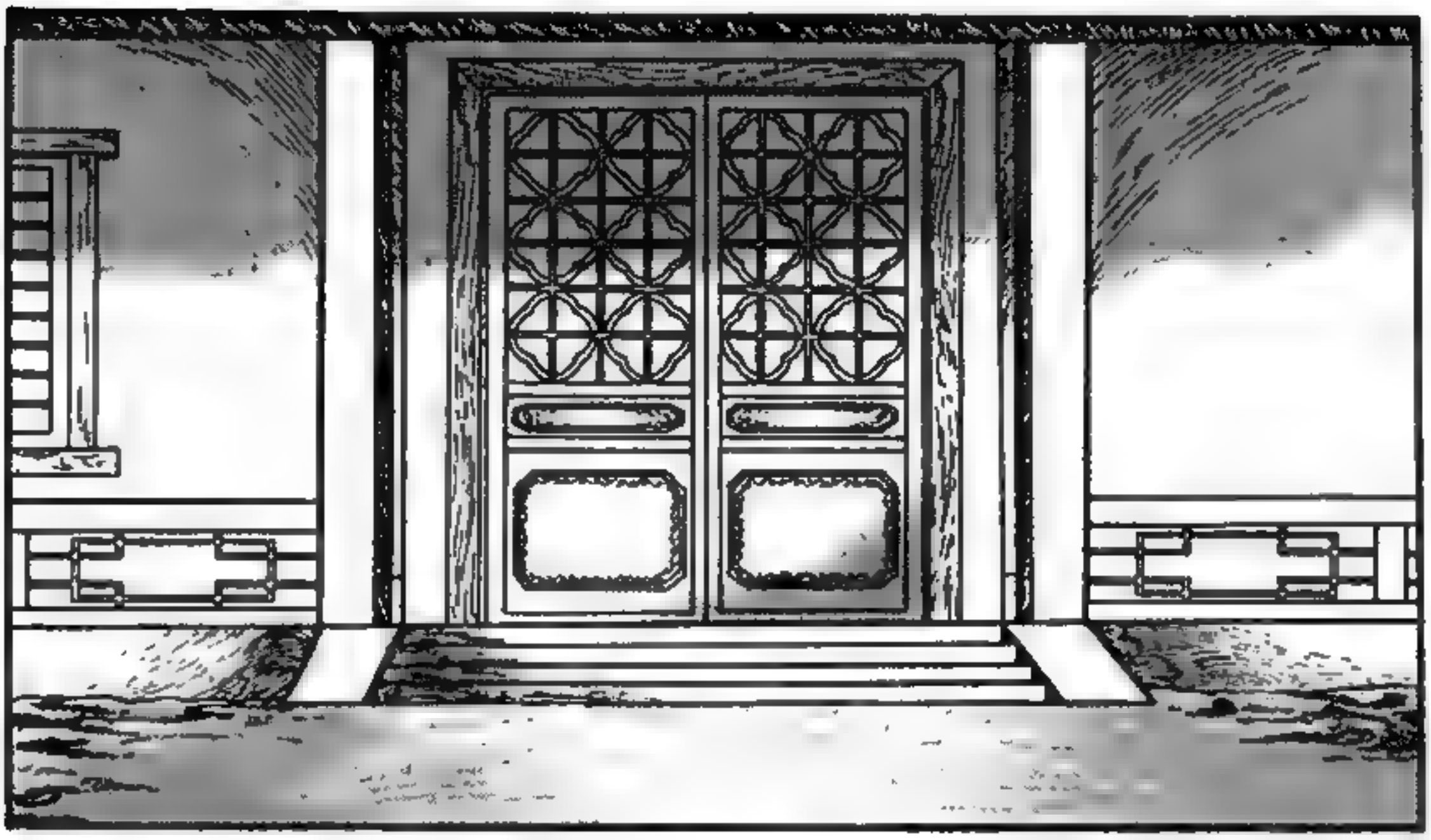
THEN I SHALL GO ASK THE CHANCELLOR RIGHT AWAY.

HMM... YES, THAT MIGHT WORK.

HAVE CAO CAO COME INSPECT YOUR SOLDIERS TO ENSURE ALL IS WELL FOR THE CAMPAIGN. AND WHEN HE DOES SO, GIVE THE ORDER FOR YOUR MEN TO CUT HIM DOWN ON THE SPOT.

YES, THANK YOU.

SECRET INFORMER



OH NO!
HUANG KUI
IS HERE!

WELCOME
HOME, DEAR.

QUICKLY!
QUICKLY!

ARE YOU
FEELING
UNWELL?

IT'S
NOTHING.
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU SEEM A
LITTLE SHAKEN UP.

NO, JUST
A LITTLE
DRUNK.
THAT'S ALL.

YOU'RE RIGHT.
HMM, MY BROTHER-IN-LAW IS DEFINITELY ACTING VERY STRANGE...

I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT HE'S ONLY PRETEND-ING TO BE LOYAL TO THE CHANCELLOR.

I HAVE A FEELING THIS MIGHT JUST BE OUR TICKET TO BECOMING A PROPER HUSBAND AND WIFE.

WHAT SHOULD I ASK?

GO AND TRY TO GET HIM TO LOOSEN HIS LIPS.

ASK HIM WHY THE CITIZENS CALL IMPERIAL UNCLE LIU VIRTUOUS BUT CHANCELLOR CAO EVIL. MAKE SURE TO CAREFULLY REMEMBER EVERY WORD OF HIS REPLY.

THAT DEPENDS ON HIS REPLY...

AND IF I ASK HIM THAT, WE CAN GET MARRIED!?

OKAY.
GOOD LUCK.

DID SOMETHING BAD HAPPEN TONIGHT?

OH GOOD EVENING, CHUNXIANG.

WELCOME HOME, MASTER.

MASTER, THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT.

OH, THERE YOU GO AGAIN! I CAN TELL WHEN YOU'RE NOT BEING YOUR USUAL SELF, YOU KNOW!

N-NO, IT'S NOTHING.

WHY IS IT THAT THE PEOPLE ALL SPEAK WELL OF IMPERIAL UNCLE LIU, BUT SPEAK BADLY OF CHANCELLOR CAO?

AS A MINISTER SERVING THE CHANCELLOR, I PERSONALLY KNOW JUST HOW HE HAS UNJUSTLY USURPED IMPERIAL AUTHORITY.

I SEE, SO EVEN A WOMAN SUCH AS YOU CAN DISTINGUISH GOOD FROM EVIL.

NOT JUST MY HOPES, BUT THE HOPES OF ALL THOSE WHO WISH TO RESTORE THE EMPIRE TO ITS FORMER GLORY.

OH? DOES THAT MEAN YOUR HOPES WILL FINALLY COME TRUE?

AND THAT IS WHY I PLAN TO STRIKE THE CHANCELLOR DOWN. TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'VE ALREADY MADE THE PREPARATIONS.

AT LAST, HAN SHALL BE AT PEACE.

GENERAL MA TENG HAPPENS TO BE ONE OF THOSE MEN, AND HE'LL HAVE HIS SOLDIERS KILL CAO CAO DURING THE CEREMONIAL INSPECTION OF THE TROOPS TOMORROW.

DOES THIS MEAN WE CAN GET MARRIED?
YES, OF COURSE...
YES, THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD ME.
WHAT!? HE PLANS TO ASSASSINATE THE CHANCELLOR TOMORROW!?

WHAT!? HUANG KUI AND MA TENG ARE PLOTTING TO KILL ME!?

I SEE, THAT EXPLAINS WHY HUANG KUI WANTED TO BE APPOINTED AS MA TENG'S ADVISOR.

YES, SIR.

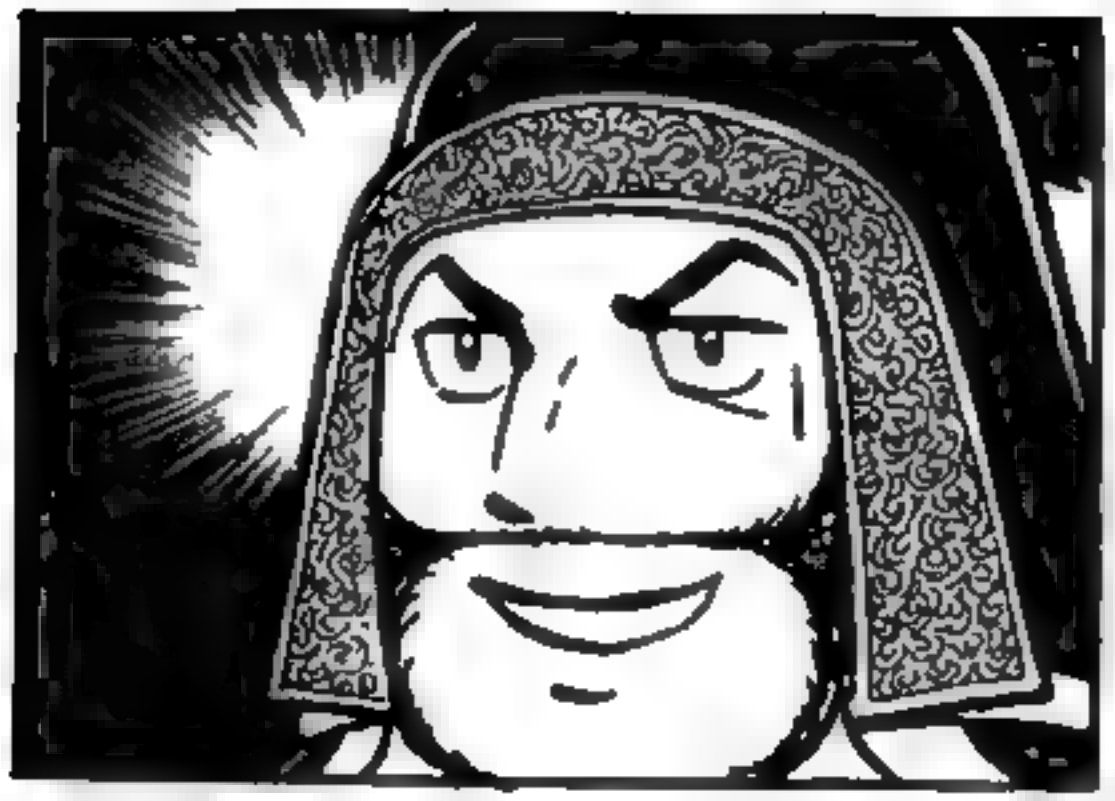
AND CALL XU CHU, XIAHOU YUAN, AND CAO HONG HERE.

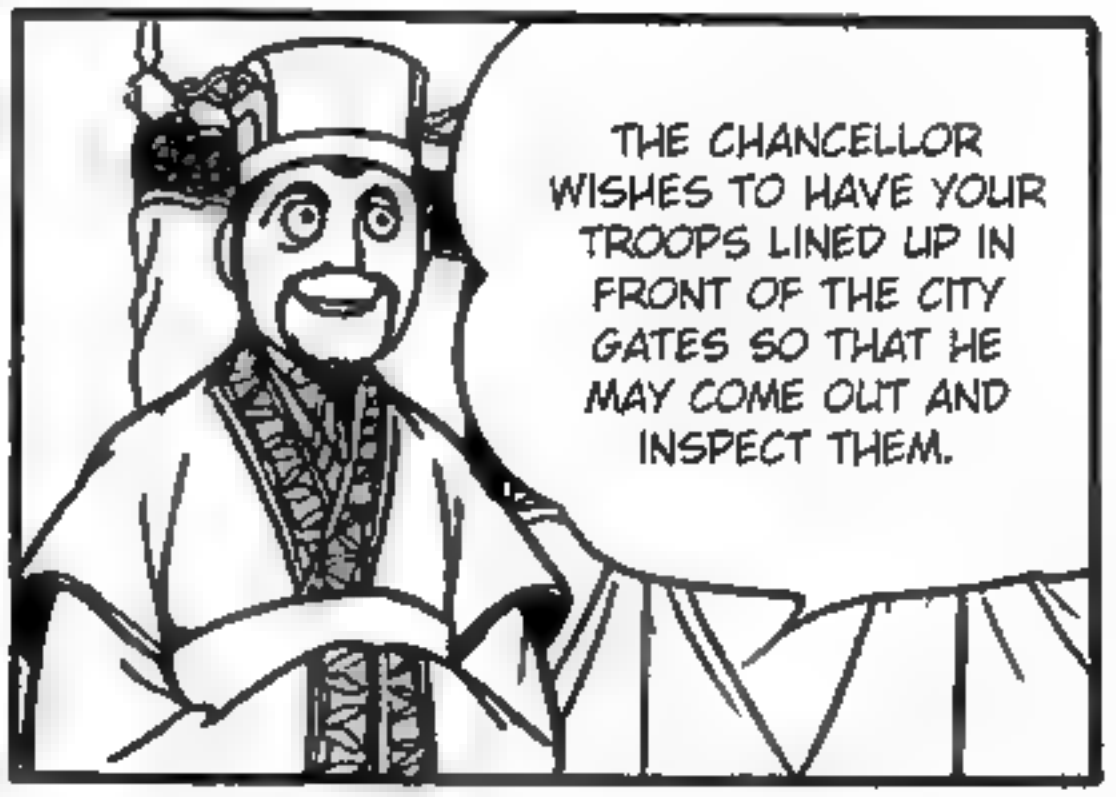
ARREST HUANG KUI AT ONCE.

I COME BEARING THE CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE. PLEASE LEAD ME TO YOUR LORD, MA TENG.

GREETINGS, SIR.

I AM MA TENG.




THE CHANCELLOR WISHES TO HAVE YOUR TROOPS LINED UP IN FRONT OF THE CITY GATES SO THAT HE MAY COME OUT AND INSPECT THEM.

LET'S GO, MEN!

YES, I SHALL DO SO AT ONCE.

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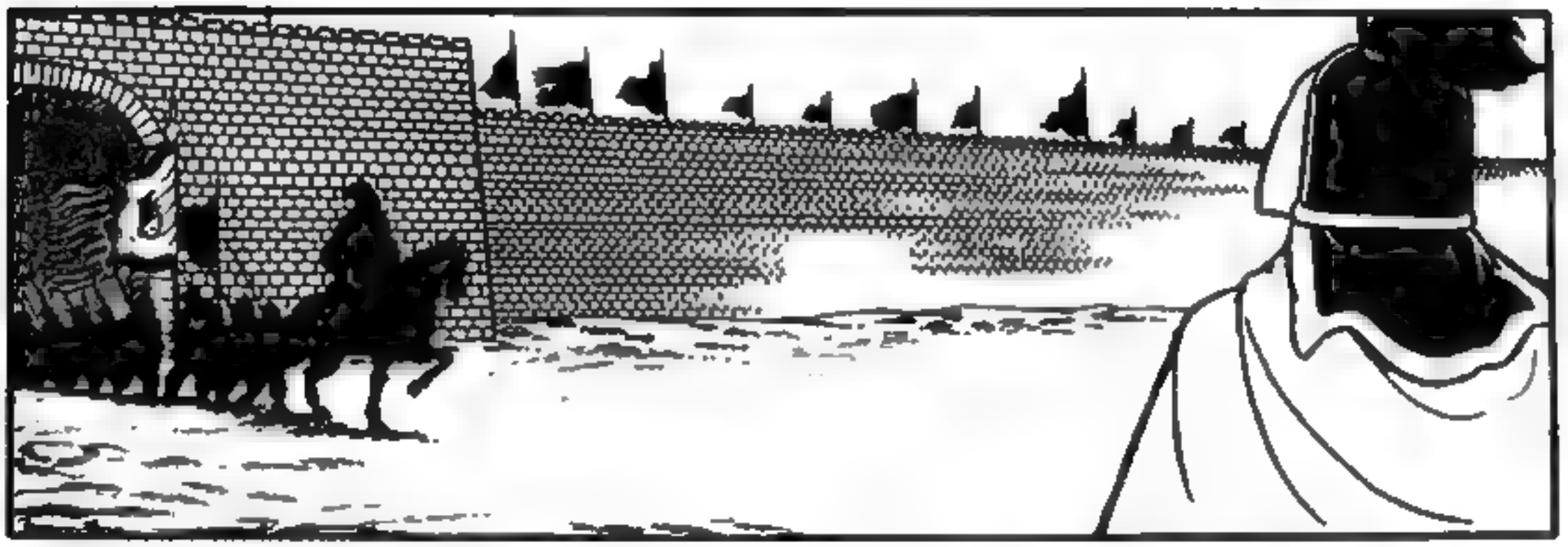
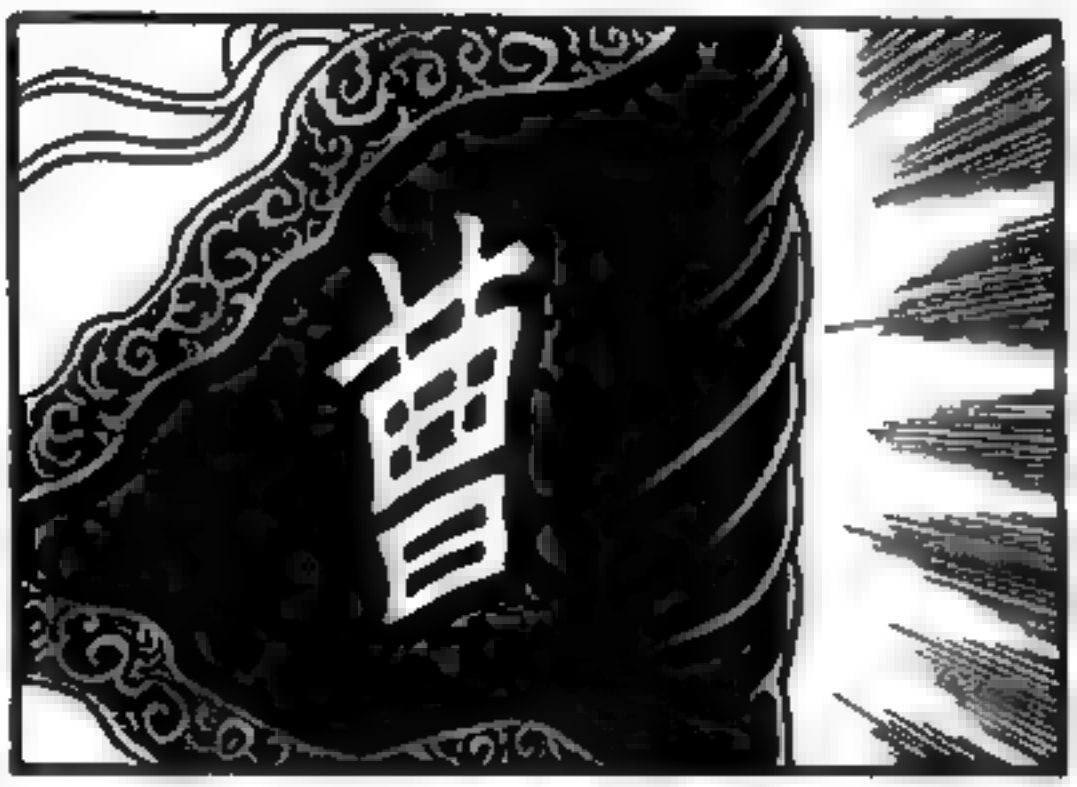
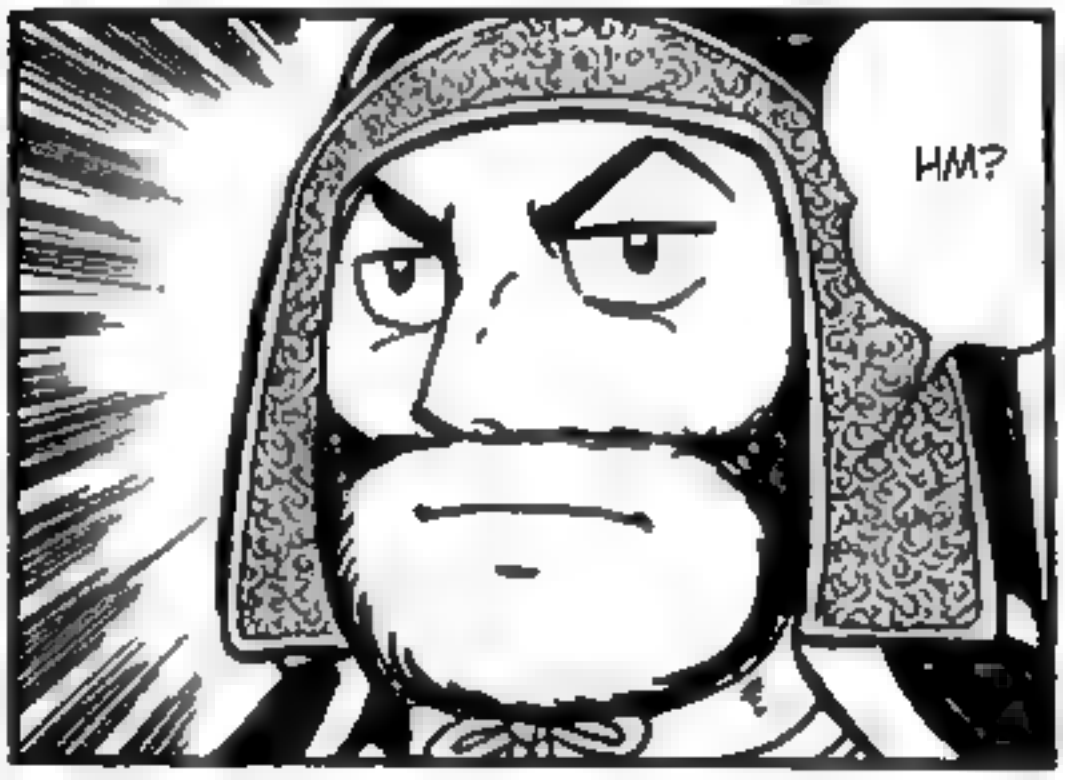


THAT'S CAO CAO'S FLAG. PREPARE YOURSELVES, MY SONS.

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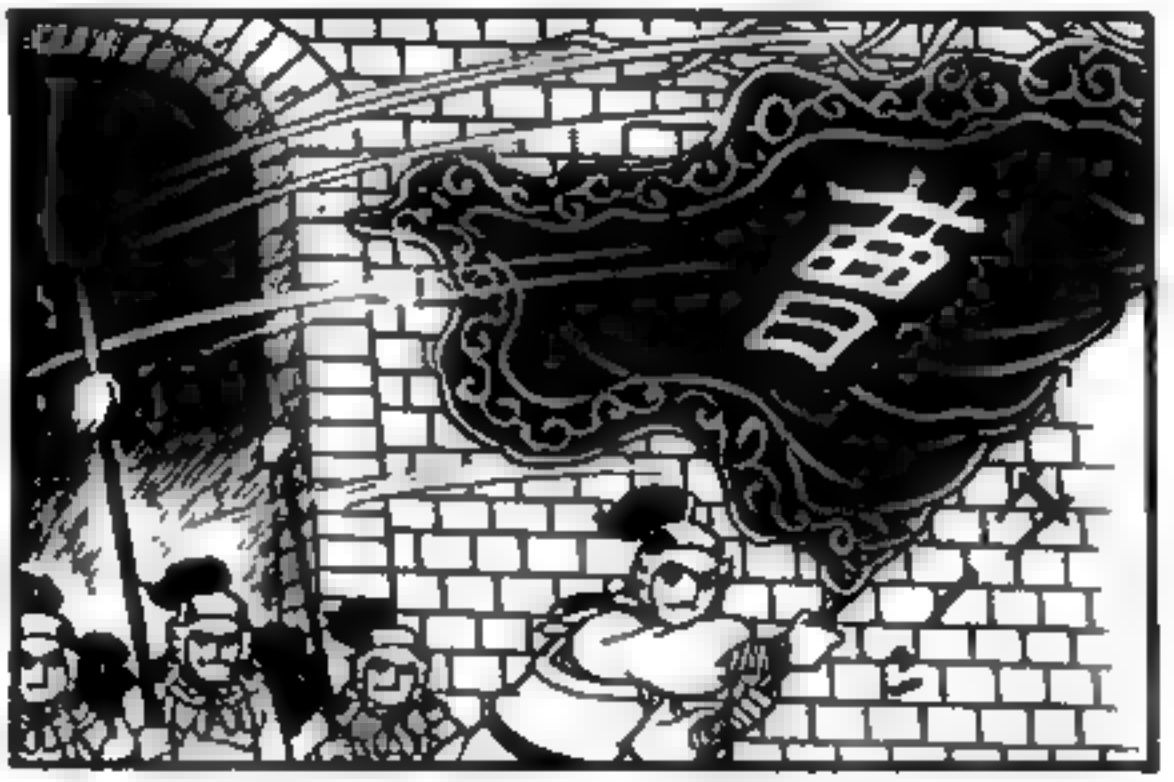
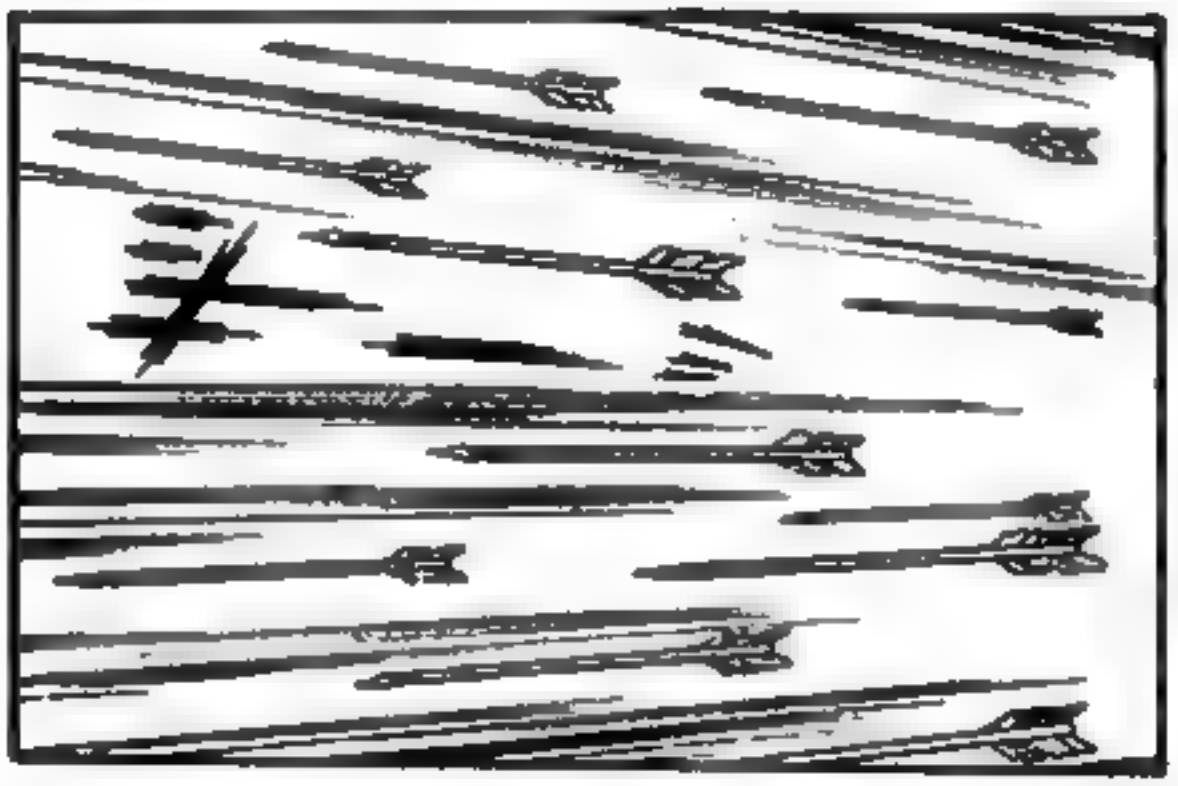
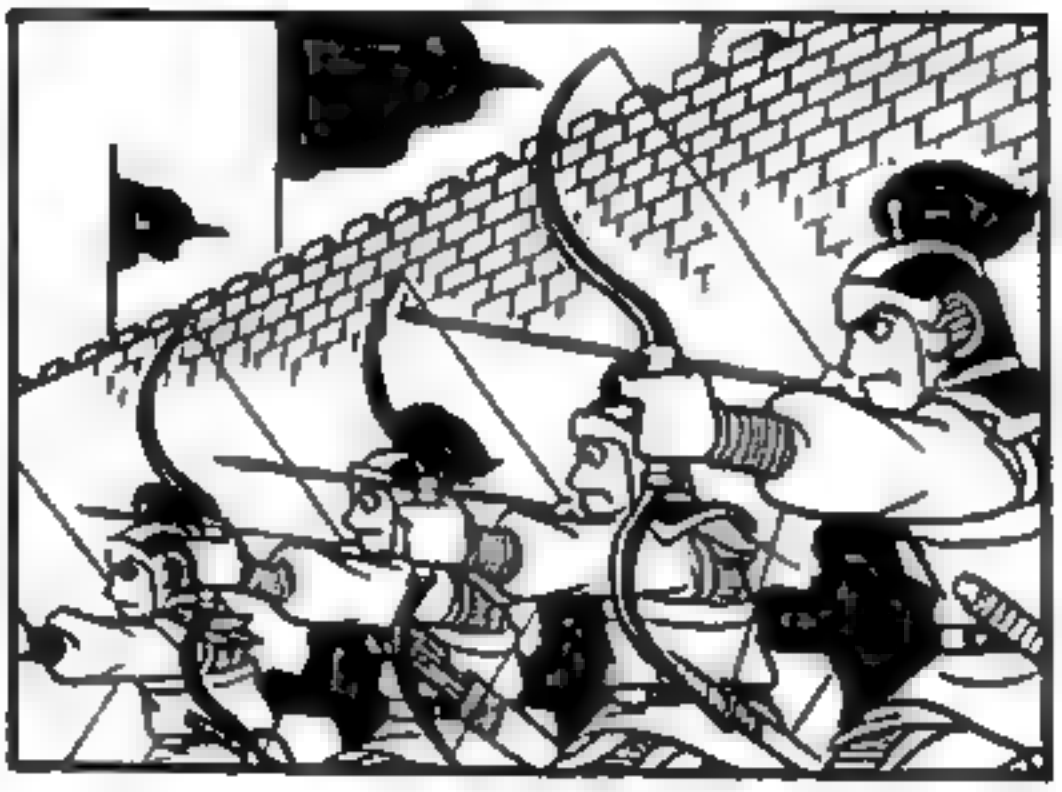




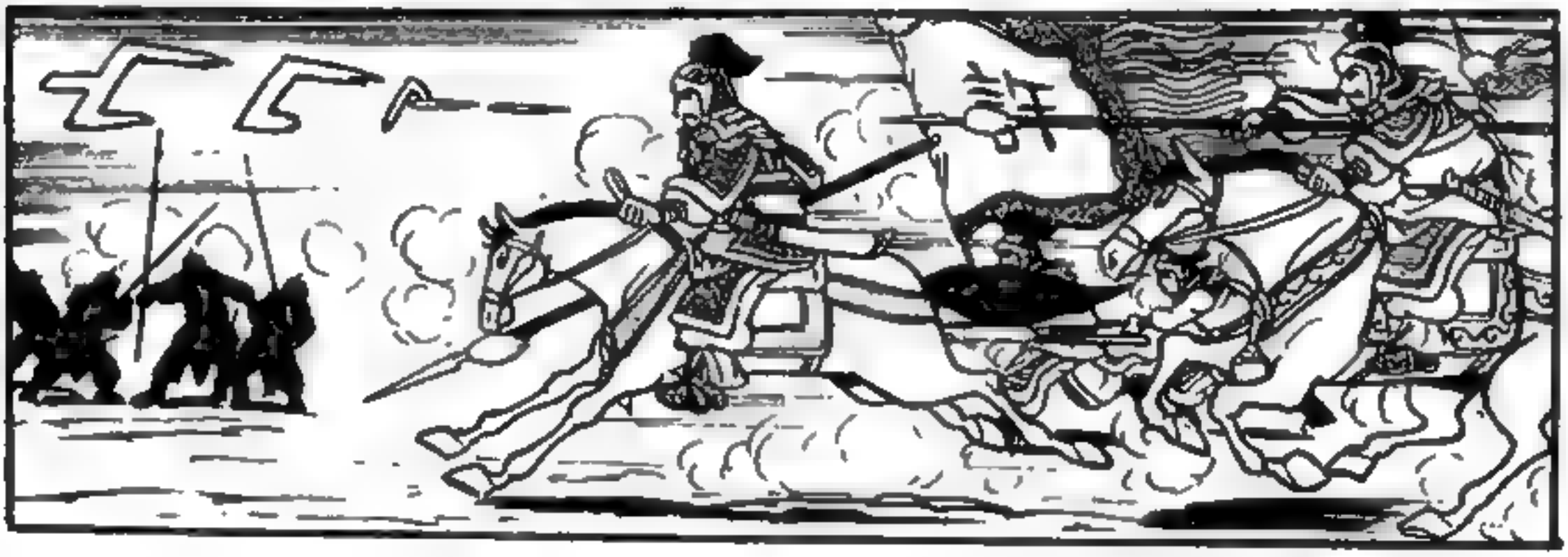


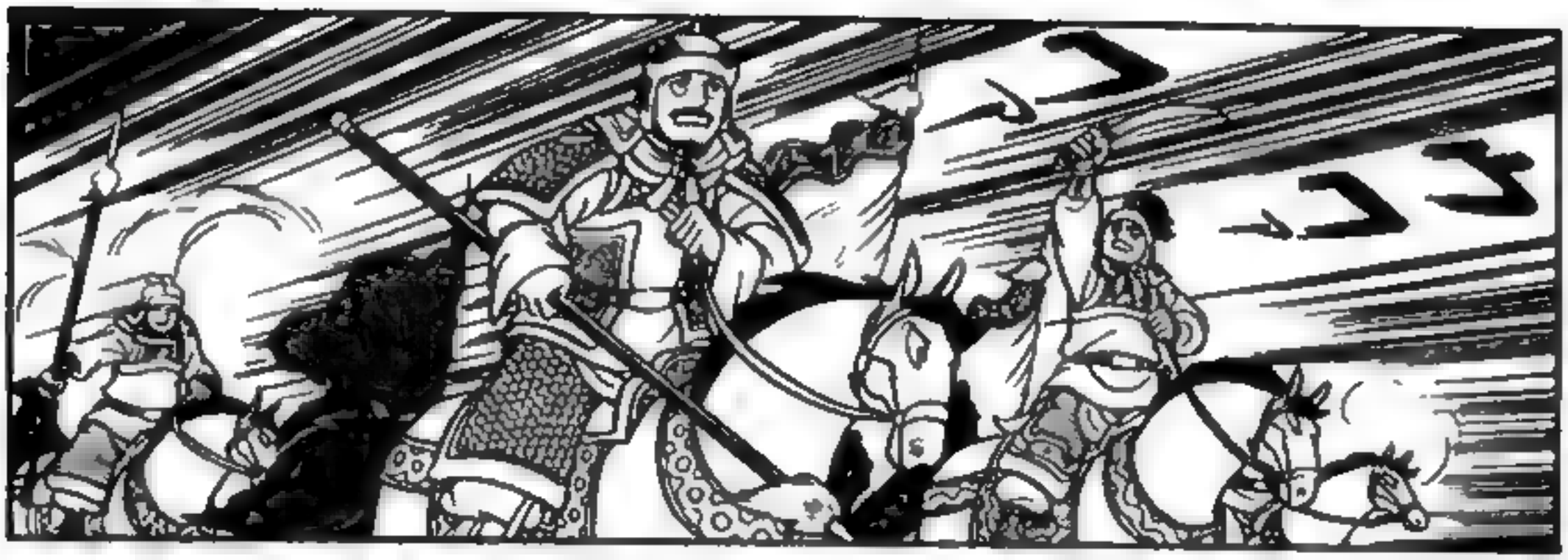
AGH!

UGH!

HM!?

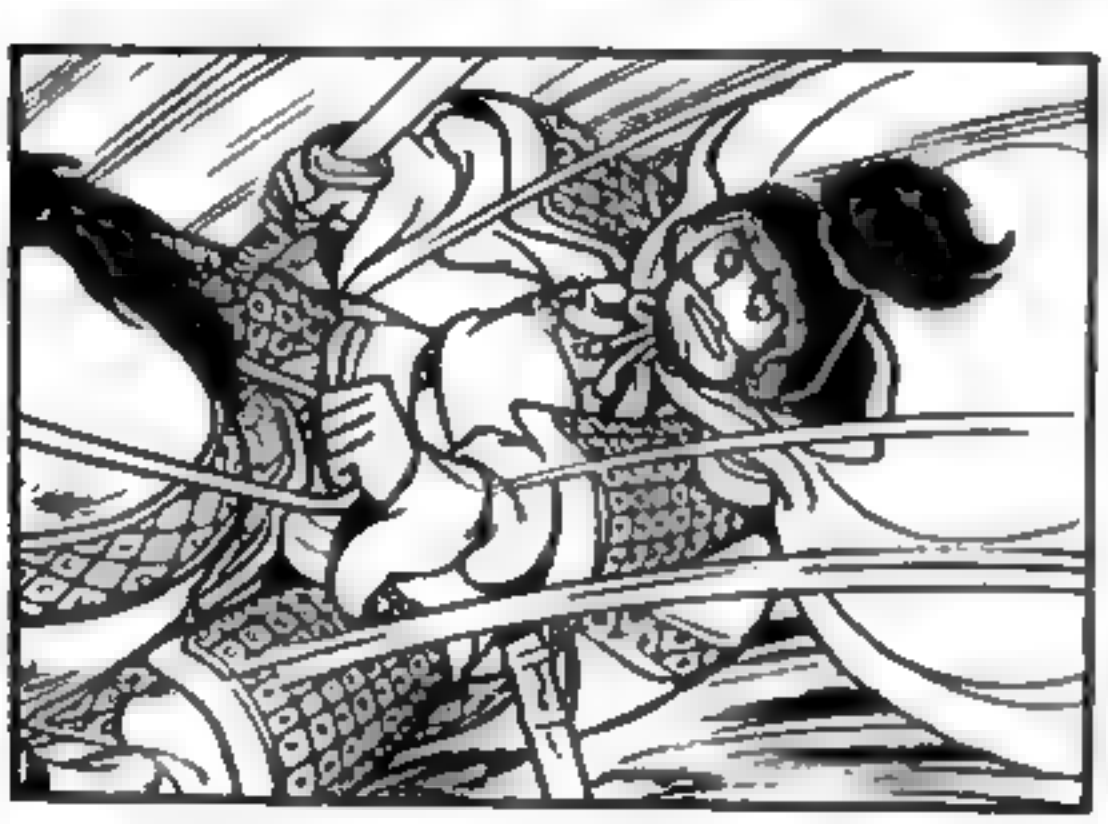
W-WHA!?

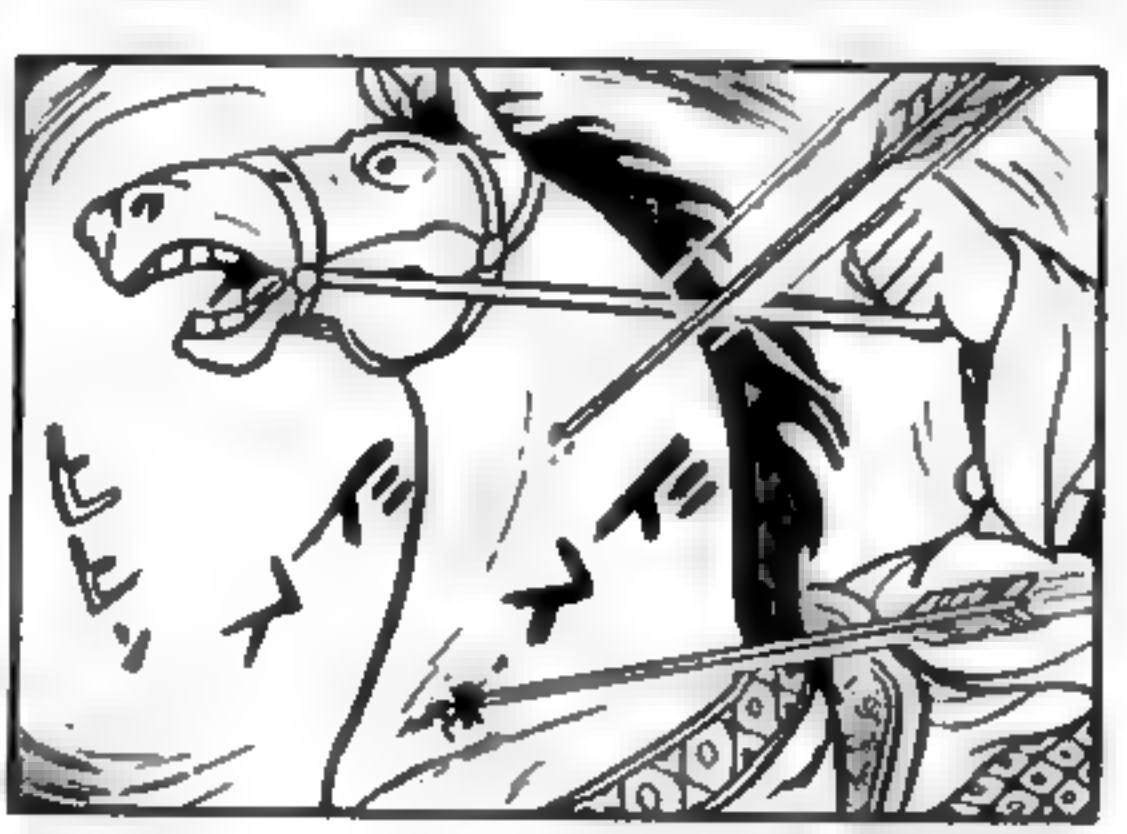




WE MUST BREAK THROUGH THEIR LINES!

FATHER, THERE ARE ENEMIES TO BOTH OUR FLANKS! WE'RE SURROUNDED!





AGHHHH!

W-WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS!? WHY HAVE YOU ARRESTED US!?

CHANCELLOR CAO! I BEG YOU TO EXPLAIN!

STILL WITH THE ACT?

THAT'S A BOLD-FACED LIE!

I KNOW YOU WERE PLANNING ON KILLING ME DURING THE INSPECTION OF YOUR TROOPS TODAY.

WHA!?

AND YOU PLANNED THIS WHOLE THING WITH HIM.

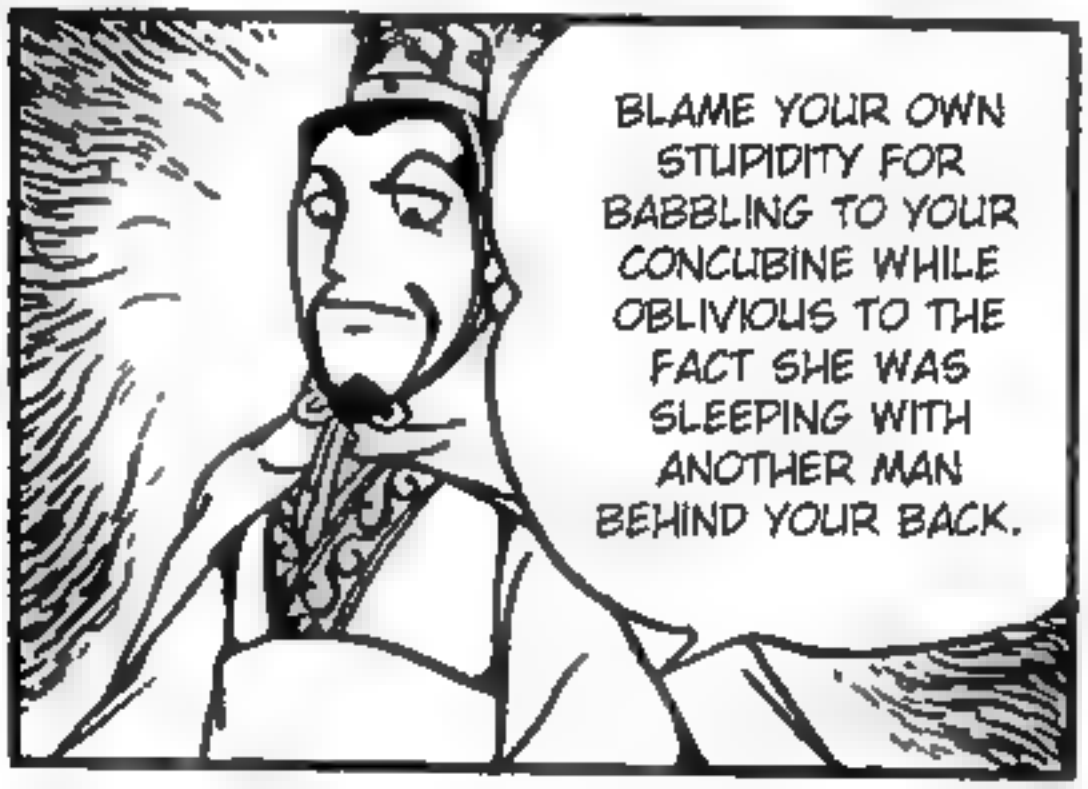
YOU TWO JUST DON'T KNOW WHEN TO GIVE UP, DO YOU?

CHANCELLOR! THIS IS A MISTAKE! SOMEONE MUST'VE FRAMED US!

BRING IN THE INFORMANT.

MIAO ZE!?

YES, YOUR WIFE'S BROTHER.


BLAME YOUR OWN STUPIDITY FOR BABBLING TO YOUR CONCUBINE WHILE OBLIVIOUS TO THE FACT SHE WAS SLEEPING WITH ANOTHER MAN BEHIND YOUR BACK.

THIS MAN HAS CONFESSED OUT OF HIS DESIRE TO BECOME LEGALLY MARRIED TO YOUR CONCUBINE, LI CHUNGXIANG.

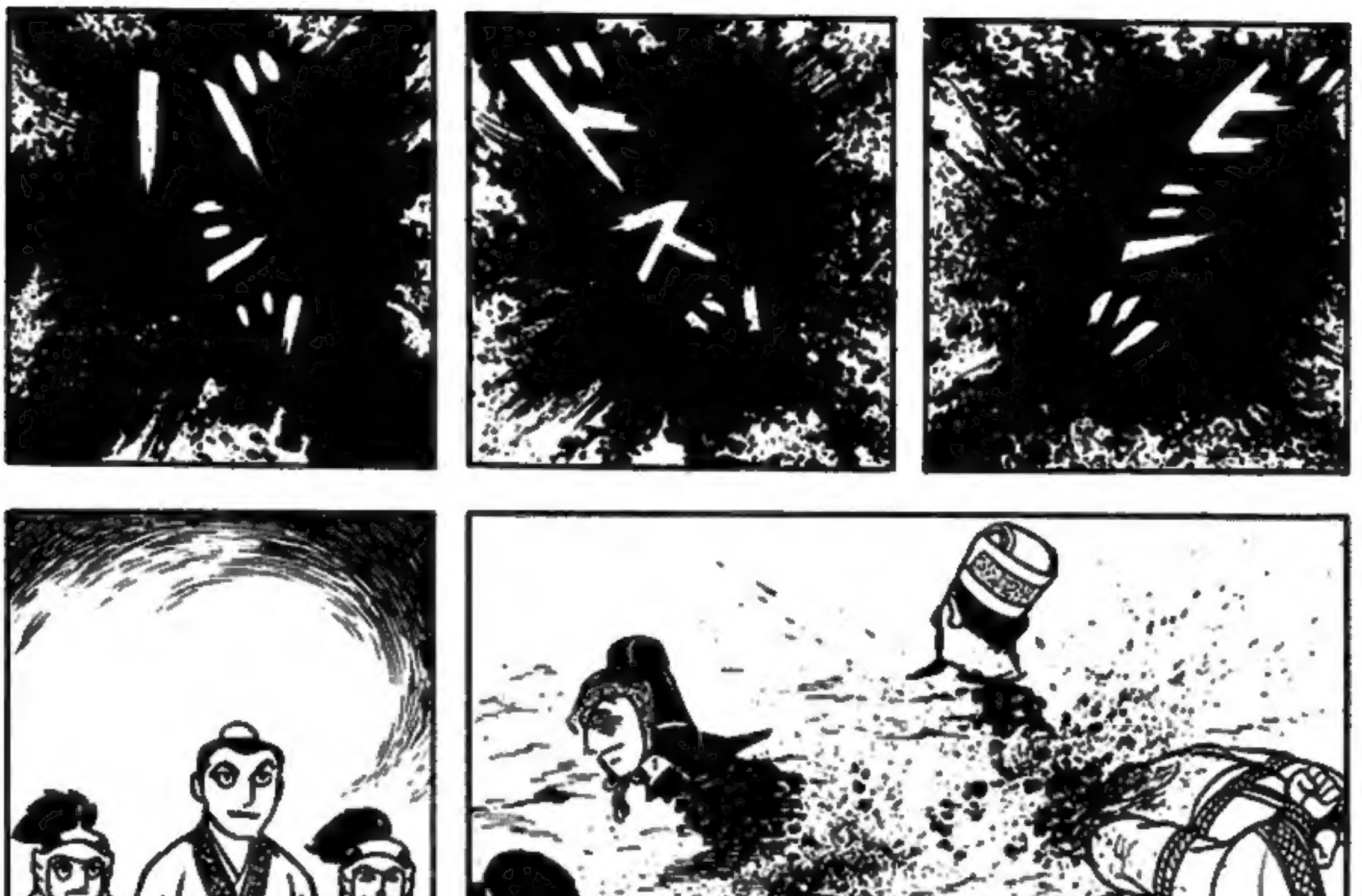
Y-YOU... YOU TOLD YOUR CONCUBINE ABOUT A MATTER OF UTMOST SECRECY!? A MATTER REGARDING THE FATE OF OUR EMPIRE!?

WHY DID I TRUST A FOOL!? I WOULD HAVE SUCCEEDED HAD I WORKED ALONE!

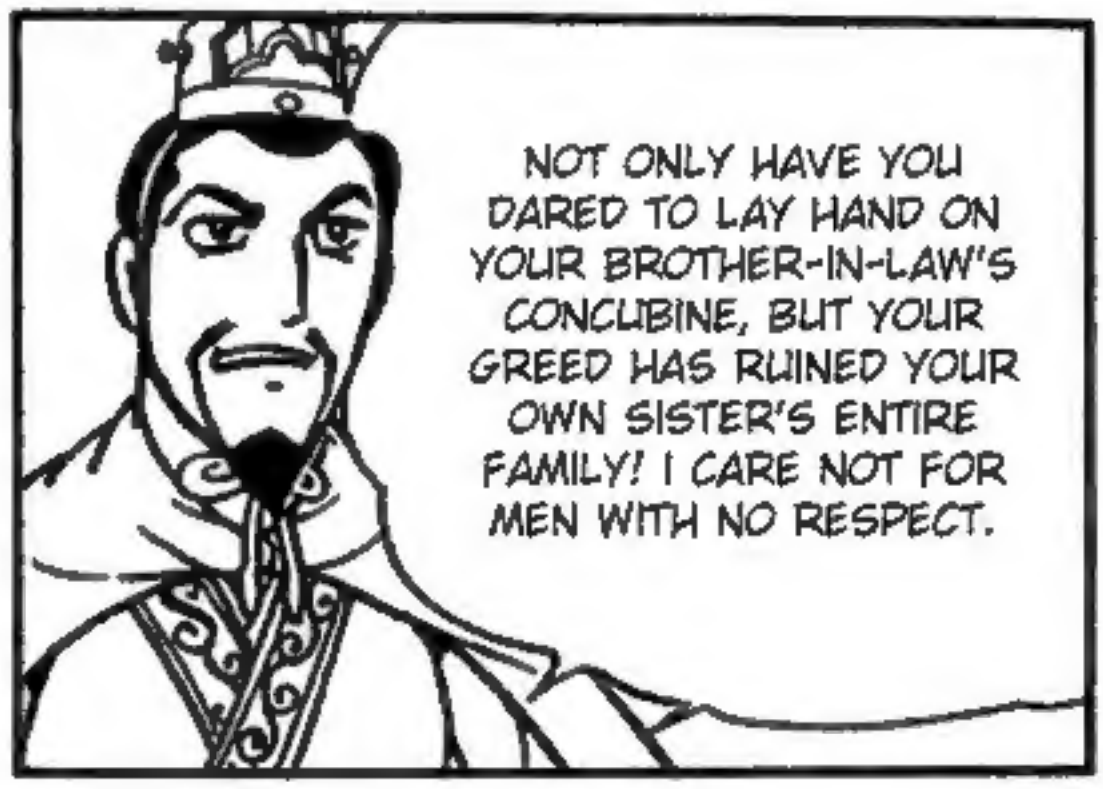
YOU IMBECILE!

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!

PERHAPS THIS IS HEAVEN'S WILL. DO AS YOU WISH, CAO CAO!

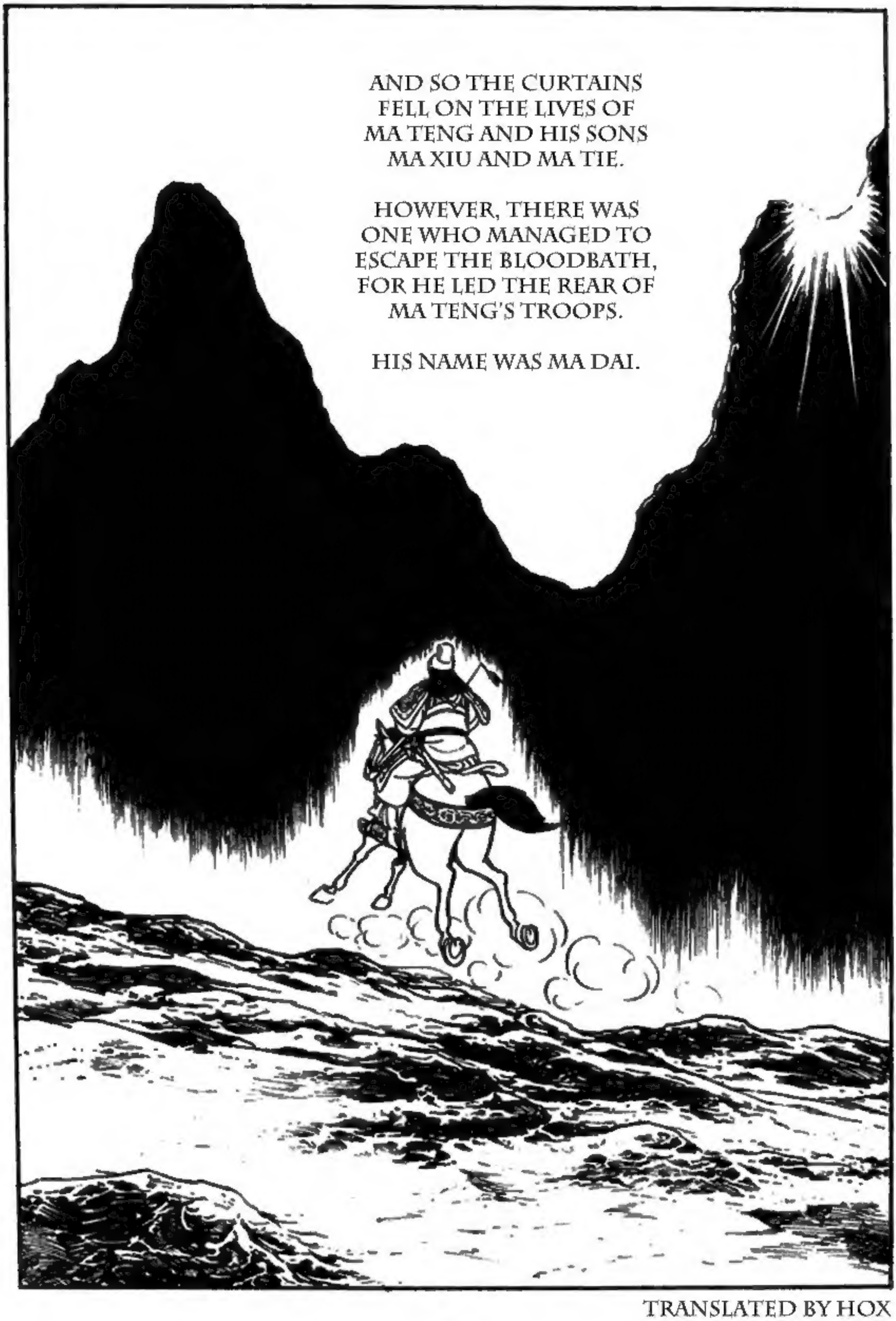

CHANCELLOR CAO, I DO NOT WANT NOR NEED ANY REWARDS OTHER THAN TO BE LEGALLY WED TO MY LOVE, LI CHUNXIANG.

THERE WILL BE NO GOOD HAD FROM LETTING SCUM LIKE YOU LIVE.


NOT ONLY HAVE YOU DARED TO LAY HAND ON YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW'S CONCUBINE, BUT YOUR GREED HAS RUINED YOUR OWN SISTER'S ENTIRE FAMILY! I CARE NOT FOR MEN WITH NO RESPECT.

AHH!

EXECUTE THIS MAN ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE HUANG HOUSEHOLD!


AND SO THE CURTAINS
FELL ON THE LIVES OF
MA TENG AND HIS SONS
MA XIU AND MA TIE.
HOWEVER, THERE WAS
ONE WHO MANAGED TO
ESCAPE THE BLOODBATH,
FOR HE LED THE REAR OF
MA TENG'S TROOPS.
HIS NAME WAS MA DAI.

TRANSLATED BY HOX

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横山 光輝

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Original 潮出版社 希望コミックス

Digital Distributor
eBOOK Initiative Japan Co.,Ltd.
〒101-0062　東京都千代田区神田駿河台 2-9-18
http://www.ebookjapan.jp